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Canada, Task force on government
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Report ; to know and be known . 1969

To Know
and Be Known

The Report of The Task Force
on Government Information

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Canada. Task force on government
information
Report ; to know and be known.

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Task Force
on Government Information

The Right Honourable
Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, PC, MP,
Prime Minister,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Mr. Prime Minister:

We are pleased to submit our final Report on
government information.

We wish to thank all those whose co-operation has made
this Report possible: indeed, our task would never
have been completed had it not been for the generosity
of hundreds of Canadians, within and without the
public service, who gave freely of their time and advice.

Respectfully submitted,

D'Arcy D'Arcy

Chairman

Bernard Stieg

Member

Tom Ford.

Member

©

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Task Force
on Government Information



he Prime Minister announced the appointment of the Task Force on Government Information on August 30, 1968. The terms of reference required a study of the structure, the operation and the activities of federal departmental information services and their advertising programmes at home and abroad. The terms of reference also called for an examination of selected activities of those agencies with special responsibilities to produce and distribute information on the programmes and policies of the Government of Canada.

The Task Force was asked to make recommendations to improve the co-ordination of federal activities in information; to ensure effectiveness in the diffusion of official information; and, thus, to lead to the public's gaining a better understanding of the operations of the government than it has now. The Task Force was also asked to recommend information projects that the government might undertake to improve its knowledge of the concerns and needs of the Canadian people, and to keep in mind the government objective of strengthening national identity and using the two official languages as equally creative instruments in information. It was understood that the Task Force was not to concern itself with Parliament's rôle or its approach to publicizing its activities. Finally, the Task Force was asked to submit its recommendations within six months.

Throughout its work, the Task Force had the assistance of two Special Advisers: Mr. Derek Bedson, Clerk of the Executive Council of the Province of Manitoba, and Mr. Michel Roy, Political Editor of *Le Devoir*.

From the start, the Task Force had to face many basic questions that underlay the information problem. For instance, what is the foundation of the public's right to demand information from its government? How aware are Canadians of their federal information services, and what do they think of them? How extensive and successful are these services, and what do they cost? How great is the public's need for government information? Do the goals and techniques of government information serve the important needs of contemporary Canada? What can be learned from current ideas about information objectives? Have new social and political pressures changed the relationship between government and the people and, at the same time, changed their ways of communicating with each other? What channels of communication are open to the people to tell their government what they want from it? How can the channels be improved? In brief, can the new methods in a world of near-instant

communication help representative government to do its work?

The Task Force, in trying to answer such questions, had a broad concern for the problems of social communication. Its general line of investigation concerned the public's need for government information, and the way the information services meet this need. (It is appropriate to note the related but somewhat different concern of the study prepared under the guidance of J.P.I. Tyas, for the Science Council of Canada, on Scientific and Technical Information. As this group has already pointed out, "knowledge pervades all aspects of our lives," and therefore the government information services cannot help but be involved in the future development of scientific and technical information. At the same time, a chief concern of this specialized group was the economics of handling this information, and the costs of transferring it to meet the specialized requirements of scientists, technologists and technicians whether statistical, engineering, medical, or pharmaceutical data, public or private, national or international.)

The Task Force chose to organize its work around five lines of study: 1) the conceptual context of its assignment; 2) public opinion about government information, and the opinion of Canadian leaders; 3) a descriptive and critical appraisal of current government information systems and methods; 4) special problems in government information, such as regional questions and the language issue; and 5) proposals for new structures and systems.

In considering the concepts behind the rôle of government information in the Canadian democracy, we relied on papers commissioned from Canadian academics and other experts, and on research by our own staff and special advisers. This work comprehended contemporary ideas about information and the public's right of access to government information; the rôle of information in a participatory democracy; the continuing implications for democracy of the rapid development of techniques of communication; and the current information activities of governments in other western democracies.

In our second line of study, we wanted to determine attitudes, opinions and levels of awareness about government information. We used a large national survey of a representative sample of Canadians, conducted by Canadian Facts and York University; and a smaller one, carried out by Recon Research Consultants, Ltd. The Task Force recorded opinions at public meetings that the Canadian

Association for Adult Education organized in the West and the Maritimes, and *L'Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes* sponsored in central Canada. In addition, we sought the views of roughly 500 Canadians who have a special interest in or responsibility for some important aspect of the information process. We did this through mailed questionnaires, through meetings with the press, and through private interviews with political figures, public servants, and a variety of people outside the public service.

The descriptive and analytical appraisals concerned the information operations of most of the federal departments and agencies at the end of 1968 and early in 1969. Again, they were based on internal research, questionnaires, interviews, correspondence, and assistance from specialists. This data forms a large part of both volumes of this Report. The studies fell into two categories. One was the across-the-board or horizontal investigation of aspects of information administration common to all departments and agencies — finance, personnel, structures, public relations, media relations, audio-visual production, exhibitions and design. Public servants, who were expert in the relevant fields, worked individually and in teams to conduct these studies; and, to the extent possible, they considered policy, planning, programming and budgeting practices. The second category of studies included concentrated or vertical examinations of four government institutions that have particularly heavy responsibilities in public information work. The idea here was to follow the public information process in each of these institutions from the internal policy level out to the people. The four were the Department of Manpower and Immigration, the Department of Agriculture, the Queen's Printer, and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The two Departments have large but specific publics in Canada; the two agencies, DBS and the Queen's Printer, exist to serve everyone, and they are government information agencies of primary importance.

Valuable contributions to our thinking about government abroad derived from the report to the Department of External Affairs by the Honourable Lionel Chevrier's mission on Canadian information in the United States, the report of External Affairs' special Task Force on Europe, and our own research into the information efforts of the many government organizations that have overseas objectives. To assess government information systems in action, the Task Force also undertook case histories of the way the government handled the publicity for a federal

budget, for a ministerial mission to Latin America, and for a resettlement programme that involved fisheries in Newfoundland.

The Task Force's fourth line of study — special information problems — was based on documents, monographs, interviews, questionnaires and the services of consultants. It concerned such matters as reaching people who beyond the normal processes of communication; government information and the two official languages; cultural information; federal-provincial information; regional formation; research into information problems; government advertising; and the new technology of communications.

The final area of the Task Force's investigation concerned the future, and it was not so much "final" a preoccupation that coloured every other line of study. It involved the new administrative structures, the new systems, and the new ways of thinking about public information that, to us, seemed essential to its improvement. In Volume I, the spirit of this preoccupation influences Chapters I to VIII; and the broader proposals that inspired are in Chapter IX. (The rest of the Task Force's recommendations occur in the annex to Volume I again, following the appropriate papers, in Volume II.)

Volume I is primarily the case for change. It is neither as long nor as fully documented as Volume II. Its purpose is to make a rapid offering of both the news of the failings in the current system of government information services and some ways to bring about improvement. It is meant to be a glimpse of chaos, and a cry for reform. Volume II is both the evidence to support the case for change and a body of edited research for those who want to examine government information work in considerable detail. The order of papers in Volume II follows the first four categories in the research pattern we have already described: the concepts, public opinion, critical appraisal of current government information work, and special problems.

The Task Force drew upon a great many internal papers and investigations by the Government of Canada. It consulted provincial and municipal opinion leaders and officials throughout the country. It received submissions from groups of information officers, from professional associations, from experts in several information fields, and from citizens who cared about government information. It sent questionnaires to leaders of Canadian opinion, to publishers, to government departments, to information officers and to advertising agencies; and the responses to

se was both large and useful. If there was a common
itor about our dealings with men and women both in-
e and outside the government service, it was the proof
a powerful and refreshing public interest in the whole
etter of government information. We are grateful to
ryone who took the time to hear our questions, and to
wer them.

The technology of communications appears to change
the hour, and the information needs of the people
w and shift almost as rapidly; and we do not dare to
pe that, even if the government were to adopt all our
ommendations, the consequent new structures would
sufficient to meet all the information challenges of the
enties, much less the Eighties and beyond. What we
hope is that this Report will result in the government's
ing a strong step toward the organization of a system
information services that, in future, will be able to
iew its own performance, change with the changing
es, and eliminate the need for task forces to investigate
failings.

Hôtel de renseignements
Ottawa.

DEPT. OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
JAN 8 1965
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Information
Capital Building
Ottawa

INFORMATION DEPT

OTTAWA

Canada
Ottawa On
Canada

Information Bureau
Capital

Government of Dominion of Canada,
Dept' of Education,
OTTAWA, Ont.

1965
ONTARIO

Information Bureau
Capital

SERVICES D'INFORMATION,
HOTEL DU PARLEMENT,
Ottawa.

Public Rel
Ottawa

Service des renseignements
Hôtel du Parlement.

Development Commission
State Office Building

Canada

F.B.I. To whom Ever It may concern
Department of Parliament Buildings,
Ontario

Federal Bureau of Literature
Government Buildings
Ottawa Ontario..

Canada Information

Information
OTTAWA

Information et documentation
Syndicat d'initiative

The Minis
Parliame

Canada

Information Service Embassy,
Ottawa 4, Canada.

Information
Ottawa

The Developing Tragedy Part I

It is hardly news to anyone that, in recent years, virtually all of the great western democracies have profoundly failed at least some of their people at least some of the time. Once – and it was only a few years ago – conventional public wisdom held that the liberal democracies of the western world were the most nearly foolproof, the most noble, responsive and sophisticated form of government that mankind had ever devised. We were inclined to believe that they could scarcely be improved, that if we left them alone, and gave them a little time, they would eventually solve all social problems and fulfil every just demand. We know better now.

We know that among huge minorities in the western countries, there is a new, profound and wide-spread disaffection with the pretensions of government. More people have a higher standard of living than ever before; nevertheless, there is resentment about the gap between the old promises of democratic rhetoric and the frequently bitter realities of what the system has actually delivered to many people. The evidence of public unhappiness is often notorious: strikes by millions of workers in Europe; the surge of student violence everywhere; open racial warfare in the United States, along with the continuing promise there of bloodier days to come; and, on an appropriately more modest scale, our own mad bombers.

Some of the evidence of public unhappiness is not so sensational as bombs and riots, but it is no less ominous. A young American writer, Jesse Kornbluth, speculates in a book called *Notes from the New Underground* that the anti-establishment underground newspapers which have recently blossomed all over the United States and Canada may be "... only the first tangible beginning of a disaffection so radical that it will frighten America as much as the black revolt." What frightens Americans will frighten Canadians, only a little while later. And Robert Fulford, Editor of *Saturday Night*, recently urged that young Canadians and the authorities begin to talk to each other with frankness. Fulford happened to be writing about marijuana, but he was also discussing communication: "Our society lives simultaneously on so many levels of opinion and experience that mutual understanding requires the most strenuous effort."

It is probably too simple to argue that every dramatic and alarming public development in Canada, or the United States, or Europe, is a direct and sole result of the failure of our democratic systems. One can talk, too, about the Generation Gap; about sudden affluence; about the bewildering technological miracles of our time; about the

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speed of communications and the daily message bombardment; about the improving standards of education; about sex; The Bomb; racism as a chronic condition of human life; violence as a chronic condition of western history; and, perhaps, about Original Sin as well. There are as many explanations of the public unhappiness as there are people to talk about it but, even if it were possible to consider every theory, one uncomfortable idea would still be clinging around.

This is the idea that if government had been perfect, and perfectly tuned in, none of these other causes of unrest would matter as much as they do. What, after all, is democratic government for? We have counted on it to be so sensitive to the moods of the people that it would compensate for all manner of troubles even before the troubles broke out. In a sense then, it is still possible to blame everything on "the government". For the governments of the west have grown terribly out of touch with tens of millions of their people. These people neither believe what their governments say, nor care about them, nor expect much more from them than the right to avoid starvation. To use only the first of some unavoidable clichés that will pop up in this Report from time to time, such citizens are "alienated" from the highest government in the land. They are the lost, the unreached.

It is a crucial paradox of the times that governments, in the interests of improving the personal welfare of the individual citizen, have grown so huge and so complex that the individual is no longer able to feel that he personally matters to them. Moreover, a Federal Government may appear not merely impersonal and remote but increasingly intrusive and imperative. One report to the Task Force put the problem in Canada this way:

"Governments feel increasingly a compulsion to compel: the single issue of environmental pollution will shortly oblige every citizen to comply with government regulations affecting cherished private routines of living. In these circumstances, governments must acquire the power to speak persuasively and continuously, on many subjects and at many levels of comprehension. Unless this skill on the part of government is quickly acquired, there is a risk that administration will be swamped by rising tides of incomprehension and discontent."

In addition to those who are alienated, uncomprehending and discontented, however, there are those who simply feel that their governments do not level with them. People as a whole are better educated than they used to be. They know more than their fathers did, and knowing more

things often makes people want to know more still. "The higher level of education," says a distinguished Canadian industrialist, "has increased the desire of the people to know about matters that affect them. The government must recognize that, and extend it to its own processes. It can no longer decide without explanation, introduce programmes without defending them, or adopt policies without justifying them."

Another grave difficulty in the dialogue between government and the people arises from the remarkable failure of government to understand and exploit such technological miracles as television. A bewildering result of this failure is that the speed and variety of communications techniques have tended to make both the alienated and the inquisitive feel not more closely in touch with their government but, rather, more insulated and more irrelevant to the processes of government than ever before.

A century ago, it may have taken weeks for some Canadians to find out what Sir John A. Macdonald's Government had decided to do about, say, Canada's trade relations with the United States. But, for years before that, they'd gabbed about tariffs at picnics, at public meetings, and in the saloons; they'd written to the papers; they'd heard all the politicians out; and now, no matter what Sir John A. had to say about it all, at least they knew they'd been consulted. Today, it is frequently not necessary for Canadians to wait any time at all to hear the pronouncements of their politicians. If they can tear themselves away from the *Rowan and Martin reruns*, the *Avengers* and the TV hockey, they may watch a political leader at the very moment he first opens his mouth on an important national issue, and there's always the remote chance the speech will even be entertaining. And yet, among the pitches for deodorant and beer, for toilet soap and credit cards, the political leader is still merely a man on the screen and he's talking *at* the people about a decision that may already have been made; and, though the technology of television may truly be a marvel, it may also contribute to the uncomfortable feeling that the political opinions of the ordinary fellow, that viewer fellow, simply do not matter anymore. George Wald, a Professor of Biology at Harvard and a Nobel laureate, spoke in March 1969 against the stockpiling of nuclear weapons, and one of the dangers he warned about was the fact that, "We are under repeated pressure to accept things that are presented to us as settled decisions that have been made. Always there is the thought: Let's go on from there."

Richard Goodwin, an American political adviser, wrote in January 1969 that ". . . it would be hard to overstata the extent to which the malaise of powerlessness has eaten its way into our society, evoking an aimless uneasiness, frustration and fury." Goodwin goes on to discuss the discontent, not of black militants or radical students but simply of your average, politically numb, middle-class suburbanite. "The air around him is poisoned, parklaw disappears under relentless bulldozers, traffic stalls at jams, airplanes cannot land, and even his own streets are unsafe and, increasingly, streaked with terror. Yet, he cannot remember having decided that these things should happen, or even having wished them. He has no sense that there is anything he can do to arrest the tide. He does not know whom to blame. Somehow, the crucial aspects of his environment seem in the grip of forces that are too huge and impersonal to attack. You cannot vote them out of office or shout them down"

"This powerlessness", Goodwin adds, "in large measure, is a product of the complexity and the sheer size of modern society, is a problem in itself. It is a problem in the same way that a lack of money or of useful work is a problem. For individuals have a fundamental, instinctive need for a degree of personal mastery over their lives and their environment . . ." Political Science Professor Léon Dion of Laval University, wrote in February, 1969, that old divisions of our industrial society are fast fading away. The real gulf today is no longer between "workers, capitalists, consumers and producers, but between those who participate and those who do not . . ." Dion maintains that, if large numbers of people fail to take part in the conduct of public affairs, "it is because they are prevented from doing so by a lack of the resources which would make this participation meaningful: money, social and economic status, a sense of efficacy and personal prestige, membership in active groups, and so on. Among these resources, the most commonly wanting . . . is the information factor"

If they feel they have no hope at all of controlling the circumstances of their lives, then, to use another half-worked adjective of the Sixties, they become politicized "apathetic." That gives us the disaffected, the alienated and the apathetic, millions of them. It is not hard to imagine that they are also cynical, ignorant, and uninformed or misinformed. At worst, such men and women are ripe for the blandishments of a demagogue. At best, their energy and their intelligence are simply lost to the political processes of the country.

The danger is that governments will continue to engage few citizens in relevant consultation over the problems their country that the disaffected, the alienated, the apathetic and the politically ignorant will relentlessly increase their numbers. That danger may still be fairly noted in Canada but, nevertheless one of the more pressing discoveries of the Task Force was that, already, there are more than a million adult Canadians who are so thoroughly uninformed of Canadian political life that they know nothing at all about the relative extent of involvement by their Federal and provincial governments. Moreover, a much greater number of Canadians know only slightly more about federal-provincial involvement than a million and a half. That's a fair chunk of ignorance about government. Someone should tell those people something.

As long ago as 1927, Mackenzie King said, "Where there is little or no public opinion there is likely to be bad government, which sooner or later becomes autocratic government." And, though dead prime ministers and dead presidents may not necessarily be unfailing proponents of current wisdom, it is still interesting that a century and a half before that, James Madison had this to say about governments and information: "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, perhaps both."

Such utterances have new shades of meaning now, and there is more urgency than ever before. To avert the farce, or the tragedy, or the autocracy, governments have begun to conclude that it will no longer do for them simply to periodically, "Vote as you like, but vote." It is no longer enough for them to take care of the country, and to be efficient. Now, the government that's truly responsible must combat its own potential for both apathy and lethargy. Prime Ministers and Cabinet ministers must try to lure even the more remote corners of the public into caring about what they are doing. They must set the government up for criticism. They must go among the people and drum up interest in their own deliberations, and this brings up the third and last great theme of this chapter: Participatory Democracy.

It is difficult to participate if one does not know what is talking about, and it is difficult to know what one is talking about if one has failed to receive the relevant information. The fact that good participatory democracy depends on good public information is axiomatic and therefore, for the moment, we'll leave the subject with

only a parting shot from a recent letter to so traditional a purveyor of information as the *Toronto Globe and Mail*. The letter is by C. Deane Kent, Director of the Public Library and Art Museum in London, Ontario, and one of the things he has to say is this:

"One of the greatest developing tragedies of our times involves the lack of imaginative information for people who wish to participate in democratic action. The student revolts are only harbingers of the future when great masses of people could revolt blindly and witlessly without background knowledge and information."

For almost a decade, an awareness of this "developing tragedy" has been dawning with increasing clarity on successive Canadian governments. In the early Sixties, a small part of the Glassco Commission's gigantic field of investigation was the group of government information divisions. In the years since then, several departments have prepared reports on their information divisions. By 1967, the information services of the government were a matter of Cabinet concern, and the Prime Minister of the day appointed Jean David, a Montreal journalist, to investigate. (Mr. David was expected to make recommendations for the co-ordination of the information services but, before he had completed his work, he died in a tragic automobile accident.) The sense of urgency continued to gather force, and it was against this developing background of concern about the health and stability of democratic life in Canada that the Federal Government ordered the first full-scale investigation of that great and sometimes mystifying administrative conglomerate known as "the Government Information Services." That was in the summer of 1968 and, as we shall see, it was about time.

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day after day, year after year, the misaddressed letters arrive at Ottawa like stray flocks of birds; and, as the population grows and the government's range of duties grows, the flocks keep on growing, too. They are letters from the people of the country. The people want their government to tell them things, to provide tens upon thousands of bits of information. The government is the sole custodian of most of this information and, if it only knew how, it would get good replies out to all those people. It is, after all, the people's right to know what the government they pay for is doing, but how do you process a letter that's addressed to "Whomever It May Concern, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa", or to "Information on all Provinces of Canada, Ottawa, Canada"? Or, or that matter, to "The Ministry of Education, Ottawa", ie "Information Service Embassy, Ottawa 4, Canada", ie "Federal Bureau of Literature", or the "Minister of Public Relations"? The Queen's Printer receives thousands of misaddressed letters a year. A great many letters are addressed to "The Prime Minister". If one of these were a farmer's query about, for instance, an agricultural ban, officials in the Prime Minister's office might route the letter to officials in the Department of Agriculture, and the officials there might route it to the officials in the Farm Credit Corporation and, all together, the officials might take several weeks to get a reply out to the farmer. (By then, he may have gone to a finance company.)

At least, however, his letter got to Ottawa. A lot don't. There are hundreds of thousands of Canadians, who have a slight a grasp of the division of government responsibility in their own country that, in the admittedly improbable event that they had a burning query on a federal matter, they would quite likely direct it not to Ottawa but to their provincial capital, or perhaps to City Hall.

In September 1968, the Institute for Behavioural Research at York University and Canadian Facts Co. limited, undertook a survey for the Task Force that involved interviews with a representative sample of 6,800 Canadians over the age of 14, and one of their less comforting conclusions was that anywhere from eight to ten per cent "are totally unaware of the division of responsibilities between the Federal and the provincial governments, even on relatively straightforward matters such as foreign policy". These people are politically handicapped. Many of them not only do not know where to go to take advantage of federal programmes; they have never heard of such programmes. About eight per

cent of all Canadians over 14 is several hundreds of thousands of people, but the story of Canadian lack of knowledge of Canadian Government does not end there. Not nearly. The survey asked its representative sample whether the Federal Government, the provincial governments, or both at once, were involved in each of 17 areas of public effort. The areas ranged from the quite obvious (foreign policy) to the somewhat obscure, (the administration of ARDA). The politically handicapped, the eight to ten per cent, could give correct answers in either none of the 17 categories or, at best, in one. They were, to use the social scientists' gentle word for it, "low" in their knowledge of government involvement. There was also, however, a group that was merely "fairly low". These were people who managed to score correctly only on two, three, four or five out of the 17 questions - "a score lower than would be expected from blind guesswork" - and their number totalled no less than 43 per cent of those interviewed. There must be several million of the "fairly low" in Canada. Indeed, they, and the outright "lows", appear to add up to more than half of all the Canadians over the age of 14 and, one wonders, why must there be so many who know so little?

The government information services may not exist solely for the purpose of educating the people on the niceties of the constitution but they do exist, at least in part, for the purpose of telling the people about the federal programmes that serve them, and the federal effort in shared programmes. Who, exactly, are the information services reaching with this news? And since the information efforts of the Federal Government cost at least \$60.5 million in 1969-70, or as much as \$148 million (the amount depends on your definitions, as we point out in Volume II), we are also entitled to ask: Are we getting our money's worth in meaningful communication?

The governments of all large countries have problems in communicating with their people but in Canada, as ever, the problems are peculiarly acute. They were expressed succinctly by some of the business leaders of the country in private interviews with the Task Force: "Canada is a society of 5,000 miles in breadth, involving ten provinces, five regions, two languages and plural cultures . . . It is a society where an endemic regionalism has made the problem of communications on a Canadian basis a major and continuing preoccupation . . . The whole country needs a massive attitude change . . . We should stop talking in terms of our own experience and our own old ideas and methods . . ."

Despite the endemic regionalism, certain habits of thought appear to remain common to Canadians as a whole. The survey undertaken for the Task Force found for instance that most Canadians are loyal to the Federal Government but also skeptical. They seem to feel that, for one reason or another, the government usually gets around to doing the right thing but that it nevertheless requires constant critical observation. Moreover, the bulk of Canadians claim they do not feel utterly powerless in federal matters. Seventy per cent thought that their votes mattered, and 65 per cent thought "people like me do have some say about what the government does." (On the other hand, 63 per cent also felt that "when you walk into a government office you become just a number," and 53 per cent tended to think that "public officials do not care what people like me think.")

The survey, as we've seen, discovered something else that was common to most Canadians. This was the general lack of understanding about federal-provincial sharing in programmes of vital and immediate and even intimate concern to individual citizens. (Granted, levels of knowledge are relative and perhaps it would be naive for us to assume that everyone in this country should know all about the niceties of federalism. A sidelight on Canadian ignorance of government affairs: a poll taken by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion in November 1954, found that 55 per cent of Canadians could not name even one federal Cabinet Minister.) The survey says, "Relatively few are aware that responsibility is usually shared between the Federal and the provincial governments. Most Canadians tend to exaggerate the authority which the Federal Government has...." In particular, the public needs a wider awareness than it has now that in many areas often thought strictly federal in scope, the provincial government plays an important rôle. Seventy-five per cent of those polled over-estimated federal involvement and 39 per cent did not just over-estimate it but over-estimated it *greatly*. All of this suggests that one of the fiercer challenges that face government information services in the future is not just the filling up of voids of ignorance with accurate knowledge but also the dispersal of myth and the correction of misconception. Re-education is possibly even more difficult than education. It will take some doing and, as we intend to show in later chapters, some radical reorganization of what, at the moment, can scarcely be described as a *system* of government information services.

But if the bulk of the Canadian people are, at best,

confused by federal-provincial responsibilities there is also that huge, amorphous, baffling minority that is not merely confused but uninformed of government affairs to a stunning degree. We mentioned them earlier, but they're worth further definition.

The survey suggests that a prototype of Canada's politically handicapped might be a recently arrived immigrant housewife in a "lower-status household." She has not had much schooling. Her grasp of English is limited. She does not feel herself to be part of the mainstream of Canadian life. And current government information efforts do not, as they used to say in advertising circles, grab her where she lives.

People like the survey's prototype immigrant housewife are *a mari usque ad mare* in Canada, and no part of the country has significantly more or less than its share. Perhaps half of them are, in fact, housewives. Some are recent immigrants. Some are unskilled workers. Some are teenagers. A lot are more than 65 years old. Few of them have much education, and few have regular jobs.

These people have very few opinions about the Federal Government. They acknowledge themselves that they are not interested in affairs of state. They have virtually no personal contact with the Federal Government and they are less than anxious to establish any. They receive virtually no information about the programmes of the government and they do not particularly want any. "It is important to note," the survey states, "that any attempt to reach the least informed group needs to presume that they will show little interest in acquiring more information."

There's a fair bit of evidence that such men and women are unhappier about life in Canada than the people who are politically better-informed. In a survey in Ontario 60 per cent of those who spoke neither French nor English at home thought they'd rather live in some other country. Moreover, groups such as these, with no formal education, were the most likely of all those interviewed to feel that public servants ignore what people say to them. One report to the Task Force refers to them as "... the underprivileged, the people who are poor, ill, uneducated, unemployed and without hope. Those among them who work, labour hard and eke out only a modest living on the edges of the affluent society. They are the people who walk through life with hunched shoulders and who constantly worry about day to day survival...."

Among those interviewed in our survey, these people were the least certain of their knowledge; the least con-

ced that citizens could influence the decisions of government; and, in what few contacts they'd had with federal public servants, they were more inclined than the more knowledgeable Canadians to describe such meetings as dull and strained. More than half of them hadn't the faintest idea to which level of government they would turn for a general problem. The survey advises: "Informing the general public is often a complex and challenging task; getting people to stimulate the apathetic or reluctant is much more challenging, and calls for more flexible and imaginative approaches...." (If there are two areas in which government information services can boast extraordinary strength, those areas are inflexibility and conventional methods.)

The report indicates that at least one "conventional government contact" has apparently failed to reach the bulk of Canadians, much less the people we've described as the politically handicapped. About half of those surveyed said they could not recall seeing or hearing even one Federal Government advertisement concerning agriculture, or housing, or taxation, or labour, or pensions, or aid to industry. Once again, the people who were the least clearly underexposed to federal ads, or had the bleakest recollection of them, were the urban unskilled workers, the fairly recent immigrants, the housewives, the retired, the jobless, and men and women whose education never went beyond grade school. Perhaps the ads were aimed, however unconsciously, at the better educated. Perhaps they were initiated and approved by middle-class public servants and ad-men so that they'd appeal to the middle-class public with whom the middle-class public servants and account executives in their middle-class way, are comfortable and friendly. Perhaps, in that sense, some of the ads had as much to do with making departments look well in the eyes of the more educated general public as they had to do with providing useful service to some deprived, alienated and ignorant publics.

In any event, our research suggests that "...the gulf between the educated thinkers who participate in ruling the country and the more poorly educated, who are ruled, still very much in existence in Canada." The government information services do not appear to have helped close this gap, and the way things have been, and the way they remain, is that all those people who have the greatest need for the services of the Federal Government are exactly those people who are least likely to know anything at all about these same services. They are the

least sure of where to find information and, at the same time, the most timid or reluctant to seek it. When it comes to exploiting their full rights as citizens of Canada, they have a powerful handicap.

We have suggested that the people who know the least about government involvement — the people who know nothing even about the government information that might lead to direct improvements in the practical circumstances of their daily lives — are a kind of "special public." They are, however, only one special public. There are special publics among the bulk of Canadians who are merely rather ignorant of government involvement and there are special publics even among the more politically knowledgeable Canadians. Special publics are groups of people who have information needs that are unique to their mother tongue, their occupation, their level of income, the part of the country in which they live, their health, their age, their war record, their medical history, or perhaps whatever it is that people mean by "social status."

The obvious and prime example of special publics whose definitions spring from historical fact is French-speaking and English-speaking Canada. Our research indicated that people in Quebec are generally more critical of the Federal Government than people in the English-speaking provinces, and they attach greater significance to their provincial government. This discovery was not entirely surprising but, at the same time, our interviews also revealed that the Québécois are more interested in government affairs than English-speaking Canadians, want more federal information, and express more faith in the Federal Government. French-speaking Canadians emerged as more dissatisfied with the performance of the Federal Government but were basically hopeful of reform within the federal system.

Canada is full of special publics. It is possible that there are more special publics here, *per capita*, than there are anywhere. They include the regions — farmers, businessmen, native Indians, Eskimos, the jobless, the urban poor, the rural poor, the linguistically deprived, immigrants, United Empire Loyalists, high school dropouts, the involuntary outsiders, and all the various styles of people who've made a conscious choice not to be reached. Everyone is a member of one special public or another, and some are members of several, but that still does not mean that the idea of special publics is so broad that it has no meaning. It offers a way to isolate the information needs of individual people, as opposed to impressing the so-

called masses; and the dismal evidence is that much of the effort put out by the government information services is irrelevant to the special needs of every special public.

We cannot ramble on, in a summary, about every special public but it may be useful to discuss a few of them, and their relationship to Federal Government information.

The farmers: Farmers as a whole do not fall among the majority of Canadians that the survey defined as either low or fairly low in their knowledge of levels of government involvement in Canada. Indeed, along with clerical workers and sales help, they were above the Canadian average. At the same time, however, the farmers did prove to have a variety of attitudes and characteristics that set them apart from other Canadians, and defined them as surely as immigrants, or Indians, or the unreached, as one of those special publics that current government information techniques are too vague and too general to reach effectively. The farmers proved to be the most provincial in outlook of all the occupational groups in the survey. They were the most likely to think that local interests and local complaints did not receive fair recognition from Ottawa, and they were the most inclined to regard the Federal Government as inefficient. It is relevant, perhaps, that few other occupational groups in the country are more affected by federal policies, or more seriously inconvenienced by possible delays at the federal level. The farmers are members of a shrinking minority, and federal decisions strongly affect their livelihood.

And yet, as a group, they are far from brilliantly informed of the government programmes that exist for no other purpose but to help them. In the survey, for instance, less than a quarter of the farmers knew that the ARDA programme involved both the Federal and provincial governments. Another survey commissioned by the Task Force — it included interviews by Recon Research Consultants, Limited, Toronto, with a total of 300 farmers in Red Deer, Fort Saskatchewan, Sarnia, Cornwall, Sherbrooke and Quebec — reported that almost four out of ten farmers had never in their lives even heard of ARDA. More than half of the farmers surveyed had indeed heard of the Farm Credit Corporation, but only one-third knew that the authority that administers the FCC loan is the Federal Government. Forty-eight per cent of all the farmers (and 70 per cent of those in Quebec) thought that their provincial agricultural representative was the most effective source of information on all aspects of farming. For farming information, they also

relied on agricultural publications; friends, relatives and other farmers; and their own experience. Seventy-nine per cent of them could remember receiving the Federal Government's monthly *Farm Letter*, which goes out to 420,000 farmers, but only 27 per cent bothered to read it fairly often. Twenty-nine per cent read it rarely or never and, at the time of the interviews, well over half of the farm households had on hand no government publication at all.

The number of Canadian farmers has been declining steadily for a great many years. Many farmers face continuing crises of survival, and therefore one might expect them to be highly informed of the working alternatives that are open to them. And yet, only about six out of ten were even aware that the Federal Government had a programme to retrain people and only four per cent could recall, without prompting, the name "Occupational Training for Adults". (None of the farmers in Quebec could recall the name of the OTA programme). A dairy farmer whose livelihood has become desperately marginal might well be more interested in news of Occupational Training for Adults than he is in a Department of Agriculture release on the latest subtleties of apple cultivation. The way things are now, he may never hear of OTA.

The urban wage-earners: The urban wage-earners are perhaps the biggest of all special publics, and a central point of the survey was that serious efforts should be made to supply more government information to working-class employees than they're now getting. "It could be argued that the wage-earner has or seeks more information because he represents the main point at which the Federal Government impinges on the family." It is depressing, in view of this concern, to learn that a great many urban workers are grossly ill-informed of the federal programmes that were designed to help them improve the jobs and the daily lives of their families. Moreover, wage-earners, along with students, were among the occupation groups that favoured increased government spending of information. In the course of Task Force research into the effectiveness of the Canada Manpower Centres, 200 people who lived in low-income parts of Selkirk, Toronto, Montreal and Moncton were interviewed, and one of the conclusions was that a full third could not recall all the services that the Manpower Centres provided. In Montreal and Moncton, fewer than four out of ten could give even the location of a Manpower Centre. Forty-four per cent of the whole survey believed that the Canada Manpower Centre was the place where you go to collect your unem-

ment insurance and, though some of these men had themselves collected unemployment benefits at one time another, 48 per cent even of *them* thought the Manpower Centre was the office where the unemployed to get their cash. The division of responsibility between Manpower Centres and the Unemployment Insurance Commission is fairly new; there would appear to be a fusion of images and, just possibly, a failure of liaison. A mere four per cent of the survey could recall the name "Occupational Training for Adults" (although, after name had been given to them, 46 per cent said they at least heard of the programme.) Forty-one per cent the men whose schooling had never progressed beyond public school knew anything at all of the OTA programme. Less than half of those who had ever drawn unemployment insurance or who had been on welfare knew about it. No more than 15 per cent of the entire survey had ever seen an OTA pamphlet, and only ten per cent had even slightest knowledge about the workings of the Manpower Mobility Programme. On the surface anyway, more than half of the people who most desperately need something like OTA do not know any more about it than they know about, say, Ming pottery.

Forty per cent of those in the interviews had, at best, only a public school education; more than a third of them were earning \$3,000 a year or under that. By most of the accepted definitions of the day, many of them were impoverished. Dirt poor.

The poor, and some other "special publics": The Economic Council of Canada has estimated that one in five Canadians suffers from poverty. The poor are a special public of their own. They are immune to the purposes of the press release. The Economic Council mentions . . . the accumulated defeat, alienation and despair which . . . so tragically are inherited by the next and succeeding generations." The Council suggests that, "Anti-poverty policies should also be strongly oriented towards poor people . . . It is too much taken for granted that almost all welfare or social development information policy tends to have such an orientation. The extent to which it usually has can only be determined by carefully identifying poverty groups and evaluating the impact of policies on them."

By carefully identifying poverty groups. There are, in fact, special publics within the special public of the poor. The Task Force report says, "There are about one quarter of a million Indians, Metis or Eskimos living in isolated, primitive conditions, facing climbing birth rates, high death

rates, low economic potential and declining opportunities for work, and confronting tremendous difficulties in adapting to society." There are poor immigrants who speak neither of what we call the founding tongues; there are impoverished members of a variety of ethnic groups, and each group is powerful, united and proud; and there are, to take one more example, the poorer members of the Negro community in Montreal or Halifax.

Perhaps we may quote from yet another report that the Task Force commissioned:

"There is a hard-core Negro society in Montreal and their scene revolves around the Black Bottom, the Harlem Paradise and Rockheads. They stick together in a close-knit unit and have little to do outside of their community. The Negro community is not conscious of the mainstream of information, and is as out of touch with the flow of events as the very poor, living in central and east Montreal."

It is difficult enough to reach the special public of the poor as a whole; it is perhaps even more difficult to reach the subdivisions of the poor. And yet, unless we are willing to accept that the whole idea of participatory democracy is mouthwash, unless we agree that the federal government has no obligation to inform citizens of their full rights, then the information services of the government should have no choice but to go out and try. (In connection with the poor anyway, it may be worth pointing out that, aside from whatever political and moral theories argue for the streamlining and redefinition of government information services, there is also a lowly, dollars-and-cents reason. One of the things that keeps potentially productive people out of the labour force and on the welfare rolls is ignorance. The poor are costing us an incalculably large amount of money.)

The poor, and many workers and farmers, are special publics that may frequently be beyond any meaningful contact with the Federal Government not because they decided to be, but simply because that is part of the way their lives have taken them. There is another sort of outsider. This sort includes those who have freely decided to turn their backs on everything that smacks of Establishment because, well, like, man, who *needs* all that jazz anyway? It includes the fans of the underground press, youngsters who can't bear their parents, some of the roughly 300,000 university students in the country, motorcycle gangs, petty criminals, underground film-makers, coffee-house habitués, and all manner of people who are usually lumped derogatorily under the simplistic label of

"hippies". It also includes the more activist outsiders, the bombers, rioters, vandals, sometime looters and general storm troops of the growing disrespect for the rule of law in Canada. The troops are frequently grossly and deliberately misinformed about the activities of the Federal Government and it's possible that fresh government information efforts, no matter how imaginative and adventurous, might fail to impress these people. Still, one piece of Task Force research claims that "The Company of Young Canadians is very active in Montreal and has secured the trust of the local alienated youth," and, in any event, it's difficult to see how the government information services can continue to avoid making an effort. Even if they were to fail to reach the self-consciously alienated, they could not help but learn something.

But why is it that the poor and other disadvantaged groups are outsiders or, at least, unreached so far as the information efforts of the Federal Government are concerned? We investigated the information programmes of several federal departments and agencies that concern themselves with social and economic matters. Our researchers concluded that one might expect a general awareness of special publics or poverty groups on the part of the relevant information services but that, "generally... this is not the case. Most divisions seem to see their information rôles as informing 'the public'. For most divisions, outsiders do not exist. Their concern seems to be more departmental image-building.... Usually, informing 'the public' is done through straightforward support for departmental programmes through the usual forms of press releases, feature items, general media liaison, special brochures, pamphlets, exhibits and displays, or perhaps radio-television or film production or writing — in other words, through mass media efforts.... The important thing seems to be dissemination, not the use of or need by some public for information." One cannot help wondering, does the expensive production of this stuff really *matter* to anyone? Except possibly to those who churn it out?

All right. So the information services of the Federal Government are failing to take successful aim at what we choose to call the special publics of Canada. There are a variety of monumentally difficult reasons for this failure, but one might nevertheless ask, "So what?" Surely there are institutions and people and groupings of people that exist entirely outside the government information services and whose classic function it is to tell the people what government is doing and to tell government what the

people feel needs doing. We have Cabinet Ministers and MPs, haven't we? We have lobbyists, haven't we, lobbyists for farmers, businessmen, and trade unionists? We have the Press Gallery in Ottawa, haven't we? We've got newspapers, radio, television and magazines (though so many of those any more), and what are all these media for if not, at least in part, to serve as filters for information that flows between the government and people?

The trouble with all this lies in the word "filter", and the fact that these people and institutions are free to do the sort of filtering that suits their own purposes, and these purposes may not necessarily coincide with the specific information needs of the assorted publics in the country. There is a lot of Federal Government information that never gets to Canadians who might be able to put it to great personal use, and the reason it's failing to do this is not that someone is suppressing it but simply that this information does not help in the peddling of papers. Nor does it build the sort of mass interest upon which radio and television stations nurture themselves.

The mass media, to quote one professor's report to the Task Force, must build large audiences or die. This "tends to encourage attention-getting efforts of a more extreme and raucous nature.... A Gresham's law of mass media starts to operate with bad communication driving out good. Complex issues and events lose out to simplification. Harmony is eroded by emphasis on discord. Faith is undermined by day-to-day emphasis on attention-getting substance of crisis, lust, incompetence and sloth...."

The Task Force does not choose to set itself up as some sort of self-appointed conscience for the mass media. It is not really concerned with the rightness or wrongness of the deep and exploitable interest in human failings such as lust and sloth. The point is only that the mass media are not necessarily the place where one turns to find, say, the price of tea in China, or the price of fish in Boston, and yet there are Canadians to whom facts like these are vitally important.

Another report, based on interviews with leaders of opinion across the country, put the problem in a slightly different way. The consensus, among these leaders, was that the government must recognize the terrific difficulty that the mass media face in trying to keep up with the growing volume of information. In Parliament itself there's a fresh importance to the information adventurous committees of MPs. Outside Parliament, there are com-

ferences, seminars, assemblies and conventions and these are breeding on all sides; and they're spawning schools of statements, briefs, position papers, studies, pronouncements, denunciations, revelations and, of course, bitter attacks. How can the Canadian press possibly keep up with the pace? Can it ever be strong enough to provide adequate information in all fields?

"Furthermore," the report asserts, "this involves commercial enterprises which, we may say, always remain somewhat the slaves of their customers - who are more interested in political pranks than in policy The old saying that, 'No news is good news' can be reversed; generally speaking, for the mass media, 'Good news is no news'."

The Press Gallery at Ottawa would rather report the valour of Cabinet Ministers, or the gay times in the Commons question period, than the technicalities of some new social legislation to aid immigrants. The mass media, as a whole, would rather report the daily score of prime ministerial kisses than government subsidies for adult education, and that's all perfectly understandable because that's what most of their readers want. We're not knocking them. Those fellows have all got a job to do. But the immigrant housewife is not hearing many of the things that she needs to know, and her many children are Canadians, and that we're suggesting is that the government has a job to do, too, and that part of it involves reaching them.

It is a contention of this Task Force that the information services of the Federal Government must define the special publics in the country, and seek them out, and serve them in ways that they've not defined or sought to serve before. It is another contention of this Task Force that the job will require not only unprecedented coordination of government information functions; not only a hard look at the quaint and gross and unwieldy administrative machinery in the maze of existing information services; not only a new willingness to exploit the more scientific and comprehensive methods of social research; but also, and most crucially important, a fresh philosophy of service and, for the first time, a declared policy on the government's obligation to provide timely information to the public and the public's right of access to official information.

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Chapter III 'or God, Queen – And the Honour f the Department

Before the National Film Board came into being in 1939, there was an organization called the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau. It had been around ever since 1921, when Trade and Commerce had decided it needed some sort of administrative apparatus to produce films about good Canadian things for foreign businessmen. A lot of people were not ecstatic about the old CGMPB, and one of these was Ross McLean, the Private Secretary to Vincent Massey, who was Canada's High Commissioner to London in those days. McLean persuaded Massey to persuade John Grierson, a maker of documentary films, to visit Canada and to observe the way the CGMPB made films. One of Grierson's findings was a Canadian Government film crew on location in Prince Edward Island. Another of his findings was a second Canadian Government film crew on location in Prince Edward Island. Yet another of his findings was that neither crew seemed to know that the other one was on the Island.

Grierson presented a pretty tough report to the Government, in which he recommended the formation of a national film unit that would know what it was doing, and when the Government of the day passed the bill that created the National Film Board it also named Grierson as the Board's first director. Thus began one of the happier and more legendary adventures in the modern history of Canadian culture. The story of CGMPB's unconscious double-teaming of PEI is also interesting, however, as a fable that happened – and proved how expensive duplication of effort can occur, and how ill co-ordination may lead to ludicrous results. Even within one branch of one federal department. The existence of information services within tens of Government departments and agencies, and their virtual independence from one another immensely multiply the possibility of similar boos occurring.

A deputy minister told the Task Force that his own department had never had a strong information division because the department was really more like the Holy Roman Empire than a government ministry, and each of its many entities jealously guarded what it regarded as its own prerogatives. It is possible the analogy might be expanded as an explanation of why a strong and comprehensive and co-ordinated government information service has never been able to grow up and thrive. Are all the Government departments and agencies, taken together, really more like a Holy Roman Empire of prickly entities than they are like a government adminis-

tration? Or is their prickliness merely an inevitable function of the increasing hugeness of Government? Or again, is their prickliness comparable to the prickliness of Canada's provincial governments in their dealings with both one another and with Ottawa? Perhaps federalism is as difficult and challenging a way to work at the departmental level of government administration as it is at the constitutional level of intergovernmental relations. All federalism assumes a division of powers. All federalism calls for both considerable human compromise and extraordinary legal and administrative bonds to preserve cohesion. But we'll let it pass. The comparison between the Holy Roman Empire and the prickly departmental entities in Ottawa is one that we have neither space nor courage to pursue.

Instead, we'll take a brief look at how it is that the country has inherited this strangely varied collection of federal government information divisions. They grew as unevenly, as hesitantly, and as haphazardly as the country itself. There is a loopy, crooked and endearingly Canadian background to the situation described in the following passage from one Task Force study:

"Authority for the establishment of public relations information directorates or divisions reflects no common policy throughout government departments or agencies. Of 13 services studied intensively, five were created under provisions in the Acts establishing the departments. Two, one of which is among the largest services in Government, could cite no authority. The balance cited a variety . . . ranging from deputy ministerial directive to departmental manual"

More than one study that the Task Force commissioned could not resist advising that, since there's never been a government policy on information, the information divisions, like Uncle Tom's Topsy, "just growed." They also just happened. They were called into being, often at the last possible minute, to meet specific and developing crises. They have operated without defined government objectives and, except perhaps during World War II, without even the feeblest guidelines on organization, operation, function or interdepartmental co-operation.

Perhaps Canada's earliest official government information effort, an attempt to tell the world about ourselves, occurred a full 16 years before Confederation. The colonies of British North America managed to squelch their differences long enough to submit an astonishing variety of stuff to the great international exhibition at London's Crystal Palace in 1851. The "Canadian" dis-

plays were strong on furs, feathers, minerals, timber, the stuffed heads of wild animals, paintings of caribou, and other reminders of the sheer ruggedness of our part of the world. (Now, considerably more than a century later, some government information efforts are still blithely promoting such simple, outdoorsy and no longer accurate images of Canada. And yet, other government information people have been fighting this very idea for decades. In 1928, someone in Immigration sent a thousand bouquets of peony blossoms to England for display in booking offices; the report home noted that the peonies were "doing a lot to dispel the image of Canada as a land of snows.")

Throughout the last decades of the last century, the Canadian Government, as well as some of the provinces, continued to be pleasantly and effectively exhibition-happy. In 1901, Sir Wilfrid Laurier established the Canadian Exhibition Commission, which reported to that pioneer among government information establishments, the Department of Agriculture. The function of the Exhibition Commission was to bring all of Canada's national and international exhibitions under the authority of one agency. It was the first example of a Canadian Prime Minister's becoming so personally concerned about a mess in government information that he stepped in himself to impose some machinery of co-ordination and efficiency. It would not be the last example. Governments have been so exceedingly conservative in all matters relating to information services that virtually every case of a dramatic innovation to meet the demands of the times has had to result from the direct influence of no less important an official than the Prime Minister. In 1918, it was Sir Robert Borden, and the establishment of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics; in 1932, it was R. B. Bennett, and the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Corporation, precursor of the CBC; in 1939, it was Mackenzie King, and the founding of the National Film Board.

There are some important factors that are common to these prime ministerial decisions. In the first place, the desire to make order out of chaos was generally crucial to the action; in Borden's case, for instance, a commission had reported that the country badly needed a central statistical service to eliminate expensive duplication of effort by assorted government departments. In the second place, particularly in the cases of the CBC and the NFB, the decisions were late and emphatic reflections in government of dramatic advances in the technology of

communications. In the third place, these decisions were generally taken during war or depression and, at such times, federal authority is strong in the country. It is not so strong when all's right with the world and the one Canadian institutions on the march are the provincial governments, and such periods have not been auspicious for firm federal action in the field of government information. World War II, however, inspired a rich, sudden expansion of federal information services, and the one efficient system of co-ordination that they have ever had. The product then was propaganda, a use of efficient Canadians would not countenance in peacetime.

Long before that, in the genesis, there was the Department of Agriculture. In the 19th Century, it was the pillar of government information; and it is still one of the biggest, more ambitious and highly organized information divisions in Ottawa. Then, as the country's manufacturing capacity grew so did the pressure for Government recognition of business interests and, in 1892, the Department of Trade and Commerce was created. It rapidly became the second great source of government information. In the early decades of the Twentieth Century, the main information activities of the Canadian Government remained in Agriculture, and Trade and Commerce. These were the Departments where a clear case could be made that there was a direct relationship between information and turning a dollar. There was no talk in those days about using information to reflect our linguistic dualities or our cultural pluralism, to ourselves and to other countries. The idea was to make a buck. In matters of information policy or philosophy, government departments were slow to embrace change and reluctant to acknowledge with action that the information they held belonged to the people and might contribute to the health of democracy. There is no question but that some of this reluctance has stubbornly lingered into the Sixties.

We can trace it back a long way. Mackenzie King, who was Deputy Minister of Labour, founded the *Labour Gazette* in 1900 but, after that, the Labour Department postponed formal acknowledgement of information services for more than four decades. In 1922, the Postmaster General was pleased with some pamphlets that his Executive Assistant had designed, and he gave the man permission to carry on as unofficial information officer for the Department. The Executive Assistant continued as "public relations" chief all through the Twenties and into the Thirties and then, in 1936, 14 years after he'd designed the pamphlets, the Post Office finally organized for its

real, official Information Section. Only very recently, the Department of Justice, which had always held that affairs were too esoteric to lend themselves to accurate explanation by crass information people, finally asked to have an information officer on staff. And, to this day, there is little government staff; and no effective government machinery to collect and dispense the vast and largely unorganized amount of cultural information that's going about the country.

In the Twenties and, particularly, the Thirties, governments rapidly moved into fields of social legislation. The migration to the cities, expanded educational opportunities, and developing technology all made the wide dissemination of information more necessary than it had been, at the same time, easier. But nevertheless, most of the government information services that existed in Canada by the Thirties continued to plod along their rigidly separate paths.

World War II changed all that for a while. In 1939, the Government set up the Department of National War Services, and one of its assignments was "... to co-ordinate existing government information and publicity services." Aside from an effort in 1937-38 to bring order to Canadian information programmes in the United Kingdom, this was the first attempt since the time of the War Office to co-ordinate the government's information services. Out of National War Services came the Wartime Information Board. Its function was not only to co-ordinate interdepartmental information efforts but also to ensure "... an informed and intelligent understanding of the purposes and progress of the Canadian war effort." The Board was directly responsible to the Prime Minister. During this time of powerful federal authority and wartime pressure, the Transport Department got a formal Information Division; the Pensions and National Health Department set up an Information Branch to deal with veterans' affairs (the Department of Veterans Affairs was not established until 1945); the Department of Labour established an Information Division; and, in 1944, so did the new Department of National Health and Welfare. The most revolutionary development, however, was the Wartime Information Board itself. Research and analysis of the history of government information services suggests that, "The important element for later information planners to note was the WIB's effort to co-ordinate the government's existing public information services.... A comparable comprehensive approach to federal information was allowed to continue after the war."

Peace killed this last machinery to impose a degree of central control on the information activities of the federal government. There was pretty general agreement to discontinue the Board's domestic operations but to preserve its overseas efforts. To do this, the Government established the faintly ominous-sounding Canadian Information Service. The WIB's employees went over to the CIS but, by 1947, when the Government decided to amalgamate the CIS with the Department of External Affairs, the old wartime level of interdepartmental co-ordination had drastically declined and, once more, total departmental autonomy asserted itself in matters of information. (An organization that was part of the wartime structure of information co-ordination, and still survives is a modified CBC International Service. It was founded in 1942 as a broadcasting arm of the Wartime Information Board.)

In 1946, formal classification of information officers occurred (salaries at Level 1 began at \$2,400; at Level 4, at \$4,500). In 1954, the Department of Public Works finally established an Information Division. Information staffs grew fatter, and so did information expenditures. "Significant structural changes continued throughout the Fifties and Sixties in various departments . . ." one report advises. "However, each tended to follow its own separate path of development. Interdepartmental liaison was essentially lacking." And, of course, it still is.

While the federal information services drift downriver, bumping and bobbing and sometimes disappearing entirely in rapids of confusion, several of the provinces have also moved into the information stream, and they appear to be smoothly avoiding some of the great navigational errors of the Federal Government. (Now, there is a national achievement for you; Ottawa, by its own long awful example, has demonstrated to the country how *not* to organize government information services.) Ontario co-ordinates its important information activities; Quebec has its *Office de l'Information et de Publicité du Québec*, with a staff of more than 160 people who work in radio, television, film and print, and with information offices in Paris, New York, London, Montreal, Rimouski, and even in Ottawa. Nova Scotia now has a highly centralized information service, and there is one in Saskatchewan. Manitoba has a Director of Information Services, and it's an indication of the importance with which the Provincial Government regards him that he deals directly with Cabinet ministers. British Columbia has its own magazine distributed in many parts of Canada. Meanwhile, the apparently perpetual division from one another of the

16 federal information services conquers their national effectiveness.

The combination of no co-ordination, no common legislative justification even for the existence of information services, and conservatism that verges on chronic timidity has had a number of stultifying effects on federal information programmes, and on the competence and morale of federal information staff. It has also led to a remarkably large and aimless variety of methods and administrative practices. No report could possibly list every specific example of these practices and failings but, in the chapters that follow, we will try to arrange some highlights that reflect the general gloom.

And Are You Happy in the Service?

There are roughly 400 information service officers in the Federal Government, and at least as many more men and women who, while not formally classified as ISOS, perform one sort of an information function or another. Of the 100-odd information people a good many would not appear to be happy public servants. Admittedly, if one were to ask *any* large group of federal employees whether they were happy in the service, one would get a fair number of snappy replies; nevertheless, Task Force research suggests that the information personnel are dismuted to a unique degree. One survey asked a good-sized sample of information service officers (they were all below the management levels) a variety of questions concerning their attitude to their work and how they felt about their future with the Government. Their answers, as a whole, were bleak:

Almost half of them felt that management in their departments only partly understood the value of information services;

Two-thirds said that the performance of their own information divisions was only partly contributing to gaining the objectives of their departments; half the sample said they were often required to perform clerical duties.

Only half felt that their superiors were assessing their performance adequately and fairly; fewer than a quarter of them were happy with internal communications and 52 per cent said they were not kept fully informed about activities within their own departments or, for that matter, even within their own information divisions;

Fifty-two per cent said their jobs offered insufficient opportunity for career advancement;

Sixty per cent felt that the importance of their work justified higher salaries than they were getting;

It is true that 83 per cent thought they would remain ISOS, at least for the next five years, but their reasons for wanting to continue were not, as a rule, exciting example: "family commitments prevent uprooting at this age of life"). The ISOS were not asked whether they could object to seeing their sisters marry a government information officer but, nevertheless, almost a third of them did say that they would not encourage a relative to follow their footsteps into a career as an ISO for the Government of Canada.

It may be argued that the terms of reference of this Task Force say nothing about investigating the spiritual well-being of information people in the ranks but, as any

unhappy ISO will tell you (and quite a few did tell us) frustration on the job is directly related to the archaic and half-hearted way in which his superiors regard the information function, to the public irrelevance of much that the Government does in the name of spreading information, and to the aimlessness, or outright absence of purpose at the top.

We will get to these in more detail later but, before that, it should be useful to define or, at least, try to define some of the unhappy ones a little more fully than we have. Most ISOS have been in the Public Service for either a fairly long time or a fairly short time. Well over half of those who replied to one questionnaire had been in the service for 11 or more years, and more than a quarter of them had been in for five years or fewer. On the whole ISOS are slightly older than the general population of the Federal Public Service. In January, the time of our research, more than a third of them were 41 to 50 years of age and, among those who were over 60, not one was at the management level. Retirements cause few vacancies in senior positions.

Eighty-eight per cent of all ISOS are below the first level of management (IS-4). A quarter of the ISOS, or perhaps a hundred of them, are women; but no woman has been promoted to the point where she has any management responsibility. (The Task Force asked, "What training or further experience do you feel you require to enhance your qualifications for promotion?" and one of the more eloquently simple replies was, "I do not have high hopes for promotion. I am a female.")

Almost all ISOS had some sort of employment experience before they joined the Government. Their numbers, per department or agency, vary from one to more than 50 and, though 90 per cent of them work in the national capital area, only 37 per cent even claim to be bilingual. Eighty-two per cent of the 376 who responded to questions by the Public Service Commission regarding language, listed English as their first tongue, and the other 18 per cent listed French; 27 per cent of those who listed English said they were bilingual, and 85 per cent of those who listed French. Most ISOS received their high school education either in Ontario or outside Canada. About 36 per cent of all ISOS are university graduates and, at the fairly exalted level of IS-5, this rises to 62 per cent.

In sum, if we may be so unfair as to propose your typical ISO, he is a WASP in his mid-forties. He was born and educated to a high school graduation in Ontario; he has never had a working knowledge of French; he's been

in the Public Service for perhaps 15 years and, before that, maybe he had jobs on newspapers. He is an IS-3 now, which means he earns somewhere between \$10,482 and \$11,913 and that, he thinks, is not enough. He is sure that he is smarter, harder working and more dedicated to government information work than quite a few of the IS-4s and IS-5s whom he happens to know, and he may just be right. A report on personnel management in one of the larger information divisions refers to "insufficient planning, weak leadership, lack of communication with staff – in summary, weak management at many levels: departmental, director, supervisory. The weak management capability and, more especially, a lack of orientation to and effectiveness in personnel management are afflictions common to information divisions."

None of this strikes our typical ISO as fair, and there are a number of other depressing aspects of his job that he's in the habit of taking home to his wife. Perhaps he is the very ISO who, when asked what training he needed to qualify for promotion, replied, "Under the present promotional guidelines, what will do me the most good is the passing of time, and the growth of a few grey hairs."

His particular department does not care to put a definition of his work on the record. He's been there since Louis St-Laurent was Prime Minister, but no one has ever given him a printed definition of his duties. Almost half the ISOs who replied to the Task Force questionnaire were in the same fix and, though not all of them objected to this fuzziness of function, most did, and quite strongly. Asked if "you would prefer" to have a statement of duties and, if so, why, one ISO replied, "My first reaction to this question was 'You must be kidding.' I don't know of any organization which doesn't have such a procedure except my department. What an appalling situation!" Another thought it "Highly indispensable that one should know his goals rather than working blindly from day to day", and a third said, "Since I have no job specification, as far as I am concerned, I have no job."

Sloppy, casual internal communications are another source of unhappiness among ISOs. Roughly half of them complained that communication about the more important activities in their own departments was oral, second-hand or simply did not exist. One reported that, "The head of IS did not know of my appointment until I stumbled over him eight months after my employment" and a fairly typical reply to questions about internal communication came from an ISO who said that, in his office, there were no official methods of keeping ISOs informed of depart-

mental affairs but "the grapevine and an inordinate curiosity manage to satisfy at least some of the holes. (Only about a third of all government departments publish magazines for their staffs and, among even some of those few publications, there's no real understanding of what the staff wants to read, and much of the news is irrelevant, unimportant and untactical.)

Most ISOs have earnest and constructive suggestions to improve internal communications. They recommend such exotic solutions as regular staff meetings within the information divisions, and an end to the exclusion of their own boss, the Information Services Director, from the inner sanctum of departmental management.

The Task Force also asked ISOs how their performance was assessed, and how often. One replied, "Apparently by the number of pieces of paper I turn out," and though this was a trifle more snide than most of the replies, fairly represented the ISOs' confusion. A quarter of them said they were assessed by means of an appraisal form their supervisors developed and completed once a year. Another quarter said they were assessed against their "performance", but no one made any mention of predetermined goals for performance. Another quarter simply had no idea at all of how their superiors assessed their performance, and a full third did not know how often such assessment occurred.

Many of the ISOs brought a bitter sort of zest to reply to a question about the factors that would tend to make them quit their jobs, and it was here perhaps that they were most profoundly revealing of the malaise that afflicts the government information services in a variety of pressing ways. Most of the factors that would inspire ISOs to quit their jobs relate to the fact that, throughout more influential levels of government, the calling and rôle, the importance and the democratic purpose of information officer have been, at best, misunderstood and, at worst, both misunderstood and consistently downgraded. "The average information officer," says one newspaper editor, "rates along the line in authority with the filing clerk, the head of janitorial services or the person who fills the water glasses when the chief officers are working."

The following are a few of the ISOs replies to the Task Force question about factors that might make them leave the public service:

"Exasperation and frustration if assigned to supervisory posts with hidebound attitudes. Lack of promotion opportunities."

eing now three years at the top of salary scale. No encouraging prospect at present, unless someone is superintuated."

I have already informed my department that I wish to be reclassified into the administrative category. I realize that this information service is so removed from the core departmental activity that our work is at best incidental. If I am not reclassified I will have to leave the Public Service."

Lack of recognition, financial and otherwise. Frustration dealing with grey bureaucratic authority, both in information management and departmental management. "Queuing" for promotion. Linear, chronological advancement."

Frustrations caused by the meddling of senior officials who hamstring approved projects through incompetence, carelessness, stupidity — or all three. A deputy minister is not necessarily a competent editor or writer or judge of graphics."

The tendency to regard the information division as an "also ran," or as something that's really irrelevant to the functional obligations of a department, is a dismal enough problem for hundreds of lower-level information people. . . . It stems from an even more crucial frustration near the top. In several departments, the directors of information report not to a deputy minister but to someone underneath. In several departments, directors of information are not members of any senior management committee. Sometimes, the director of information is invited to drop in to a senior management meeting merely when something is on the agenda that can be defined strictly as an information matter. One way to judge the importance of your work is the importance of the man to whom your boss gives the right to report.

"Disparity in the levels of morale in public relations information staffs is a significant and disturbing element," is one of the Task Force's more extensive studies. It is noted, however, that information services with high morale are generally those where public relations are regarded by management as an important and integral part of the department's or agency's function, where the director reports at senior level, and is on the management committee. . . ."

Certain areas in government administration, however, continue to regard public relations "as an activity to be tolerated rather than as a valuable and sophisticated tool to be used to the common advantage of Government and the public." When it comes to the effective uses of public

relations, and the spreading of information, the Federal Government of Canada is at least a decade behind some private industry. In many private corporations, and even in Crown Corporations, the senior public relations officer is a vice-president. The recently retired president of Northern Electric had risen to the presidency through the public relations field, and his case is far from unique.

And yet, the report to the Task Force continues. "In Canadian Government administration there appears to be a ceiling in the information-public relations field which, with one recent exception, prohibits directors from advancing beyond the IS-6 level into senior officer ranks. This inhibition is consistent with the downgrading of the public-relations function. . . ."

"It may not be too strong to observe that to require a director of information to design and administer a comprehensive public relations-information programme and, at the same time, deny him access to top management counsels and the rank which gives him an authoritative voice in a stratified Public Service, is tantamount to putting him in the ring with a tough adversary with one hand tied behind his back. . . . It may be noted in passing that one of the smoothest operating government information services, the Department of National Defence, is headed by a senior officer (Brigadier-General), that he reports directly to his Deputy Minister and when necessary to the chief of staff and is a member of the senior management committee. . . ."

The Task Force also interviewed several deputy ministers, and some of their opinions amounted to parallel testimony that, as an Ottawa newspaper editor put it, "Information chiefs are not sufficiently part of the policy-making discussions. They are the low men on the departmental totem pole." More than one deputy minister defined the information rôle in an extraordinarily narrow way, and as a function of limited usefulness. Some deputy ministers said that their departments had never really gotten around to setting out their objectives for their information divisions, and a couple of others agreed that the keynote of their relations with all information media was "circumspection." Their reaction to queries "after the facts" was always defensive.

At the same time, however, it was the consensus, among those deputy ministers who were most conscious of the importance of the information function in a democracy and among the journalists, executive assistants and Members of Parliament who spoke to the Task Force that the Government should grant to all the directors of

information services the right of access to their deputy ministers, and their ministers as well.

Nor, of course, were the information officers themselves without some advice in a matter so crucial to their own careers. Within the past year, two groupings of government information officers have swiftly blossomed, and they have demonstrated to the Task Force their earnest and responsible concern over a great range of problems that afflict their work. The Information Services Management Institute of the Federal Institute of Management (ISMIFIM, for short) says that it is "comprised of the more senior Information Officers" and, in January, it submitted to us an elegantly packaged and thorough study paper and brief in both languages. ISMIFIM made more than 50 well-informed recommendations, and one of these was "that Directors of Information report direct to the deputy minister or his equivalent." Another was "that directors of information be members of the deputy minister's management committee and as such participate in the development of recommendations submitted for policy considerations to the minister or deputy minister." The second of these new associations of information officers, the IS Group, consisted of somewhat lowlier denizens in the hierarchy of government information and, though they were not keen on seeing their bosses in ISMIFIM perform as departmental policy-makers, they did feel that ISOS "should be privy to the discussions and policy-making plans of government management...."

Finally, before we leave this long and faintly morbid matter of the status and happiness of ISOS, it is relevant to acknowledge that not all of them are energetic enough any more, or dedicated enough, or plain smart enough to inspire confidence at the policy-making levels of their departments. This should not startle anyone, nor give anyone cause for either satisfaction or self-recrimination. It is a direct result of the cloudy history, the current confusion, lack of research tools and the perpetual inadequacy of what must laughably be called the *system* of government information services. The system has allowed some ISOS to turn not only morose or angry, but also dull and ignorant.

A Task Force study of the information division of one department reported that many ISOS had made so little effort to keep themselves informed of departmental administrative problems that, in the eyes of the administrators, they simply lack credibility. "In the department generally... there are complaints about lack of quality of information services output, lack of depth of informa-

tion officers, lack of co-ordination."

Another report, based on research into several information divisions, concluded that, "Ironically, very few information services personnel are making a conscious and continuing effort to establish and maintain a good working relationship with the most important internal 'public' administrators of the programmes that information services support. . . . The mutual misunderstandings that result . . . can produce dissatisfaction in both groups."

Moreover, the MPS and the executive assistants to cabinet ministers with whom Task Force interviewees conversed, talked not just about the importance of giving the top information officers access to exalted ministerial ears but also about the importance of finding information officers who are qualified to make those ears hear. Information officers must have the brains and competence to hold the respect of their departmental superiors. Not all of them have.

Still, the existence of some unqualified and uninspiring information officers in the Public Service does not just threaten the preservation of the system that nurtures them. A succinct lament against this system came from an ISO one of the lower levels. He said, "I am a young man who came to the Public Service from private business. I came knowing it would cost me money. This I accepted. What I didn't anticipate, and what I don't appreciate, is the loss of: responsibility, authority, influence on management, respect of management, opportunity for advancement. In summary, I ceased to be an integral part of a management team, and became a junior."

There is a spirit abroad in the Federal Government that moves to preserve virtually all information people regardless of their age, as juniors. The urgency of the situation requires the spirit be abolished. It is time information service officers, and others engaged in government information work, had the sort of dignity that can arise only from a declared government policy on the purpose of their work.

The policy could conceivably be important on a vast and broader scale as well. There's a sense in which the entire Public Service, whose function it is to serve the people of Canada, is one, huge, information service. It is coming increasingly more huge and, if the Government continues to regard the information function in so casual and shabby a way that even the professional information people can perform neither happily nor ably, one can help wondering about the spirit of the whole Public Service in its daily contact with the people of Canada.

Eleven Easy Steps to a Quick Understanding of the Mess in Government Information

failure of successive governments to establish general information policy; the lack of interdepartmental coordination of information services; the triumph of departmental sectionalism in the information field; the confusion as to whom each division is addressing; the variations, department by department, in everything from morale to accounting methods; the absence of a central set of standards by which ISOS might measure their own achievements — such inconsistencies and failings have all contributed to an atmosphere that has tolerated bungling, cultured professional lassitude, lent security to the incompetent, and allowed supreme disorder.

We're about to cite a little more evidence for all this, before we go on, we feel impelled to mention, as everyone should in such circumstances, that there have indeed been brilliant and hard-working information people in the Federal Government, and there still are. They've done fine work, and they're still doing fine work. As much of what follows consists of a somewhat relentless catalogue of juicy failures, it is first proper to acknowledge some of Canada's quite remarkable successes in the field of government information. Perhaps they will be inspirational to someone. They include the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, some departmental activities, the country's long and distinguished record at exhibitions and fairs, the fact of the new Manpower Services and, in many respects, the integrity of such central agencies as the Queen's Printer and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Canada, despite the periodic fury in the Commons over the CBC, has been noticeably and enviably successful in setting up such institutions, insulating them from the fiercest political weather, and allowing them to survive. At the same time, many of these operations are literally not "government information services" in the strict sense. They are really services of social communication that are supported by government funds, and the relevant thing about them, in the Task Force's view, is that successive Canadian governments have been so very much more successful in setting up services of this kind than they have been in establishing a policy to put their own house of departmental information services in a condition that might be mistaken for order. And that brings us back to the case that matters. In this chapter, the case consists of a catalogue of failures, anachronisms and inadequacies. We've divided them into 12 rather arbitrary mini-chapters. The catalogue is not comprehensive. It is merely a sampler.

1. Uses And Abuses Of The English Language

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A professor at the University of British Columbia undertook, with considerable nobility, to examine roughly two hundred Federal Government publications, and to comment upon their effectiveness as prose. The following are among his more relevant generalizations:

"Their chief limitation is their dullness. . . . What disturbs the reader even more than their manifest illiteracy is the sheer unintelligibility of the phrasing. . . . Page after page has been used as a dumping ground for information that nobody seems to want. . . . It may be thought that a light sprinkling of grammatical uncertainties across a page of agricultural advice is of no great account. It is, in fact, no more excusable than a light sprinkling of sand upon a box of strawberries." And, finally, a couple of questions: "Does the reader see Government as illiterate, confused, sunk in the jargon of the social sciences, given to awkward concealments, its right hand not knowing what its left hand is up to? Or is the image one of candor, clarity and ready communication?" The "reader" is millions of readers, and his answers matter.

2. Uses And Abuses Of The French Language

A great many of the Government's assorted information efforts in print especially in science and technology are never available in the French language and, among those that are, the translations from the English are often both lousy and late. As a group, the information officers themselves recognize the need for more and better-written French information than the Government is now producing. Part of the problem is that, for many of the more qualified French Canadians, a job as an ISO for the Federal Government is not exactly the promised land. Out of 33 allegedly bilingual English-speaking ISOS who were transferred or exchanged positions last year, one researcher reported that exactly two were capable of carrying on a serious conversation in French. Only nine per cent of our sampling of 20 per cent of the ISO rank and file actually prefer to work in French. The result of all this is that much of the prose put out by the Federal Government in French is every bit as dull, cloggy and incompetent as the worst prose put out by the Federal Government in English. (Here, among the information efforts of the Government at Ottawa, the languages of our two great founding peoples are at last almost equal; they are abused to an equally horrid degree.)

The dean of a French-speaking school of literature reported that the federal government stuff he'd read in French was heavy, twisted and flat. The best that could be said for it was that, in its dullness, it was at least correct. It was so uninspired and dense, however, that even someone who was already well disposed towards government publications would soon find that it irritated and even humiliated him. This gentleman, while considering how badly the Federal Government treated his own language, could not help wondering if all the government's talk about the sanctity of the two official languages was not just that. Talk. The government, he said, had failed to make a single French Canadian feel at ease with the language in any one of its publications. With reference to translation, he said that the poverty and lack of skill in the federal government's use of French inevitably gave French Canadians the uneasy feeling that they might as well read a publication in its original English form. (The French Canadian thus has the opportunity to be bored, irritated, confused and humiliated in not one, but two languages, and how's that for a policy on bilingualism?)

3. Graphic Design, And The Look Of Things To Come

An authority on the design of publications assessed the design standards of publications produced by roughly 20 government departments, and his assignment demanded easily as much resolution and strength of character as did the studies on the use of language. The following are a few of the larger things he had to say:

"The old-time, energy-consuming, hit-or-miss technique is still being used. . . . In this age of specialization there is still a strong current of opinion that everyone can be a designer and everyone can act as a publisher. In this highly technical and highly aesthetic profession, we find an army of non-professionals deciding the critical issues of how to communicate ideas, the design of the publication, the type style and sizes, the visuals to be used, the format and so on. . . . If asked to make a general statement about overall quality, the words unimpressive, dull and unprofessional come quickly to mind."

The report on graphic design also mentions the lack of any design concept among government information divisions; the use of too many type styles and sizes within one publication; unjustified use of a great range of formats; inconsistent use of departmental credit lines; uneven printing; improper choice of papers; plain "poor layout"; the use of colour and photographs for mere decoration

rather than communication; and a chronically unimaginative approach to solving the problems of communication. The impression that the report gives is that, no matter what the design boner may be, the Government of Canada has either committed it or will soon find a way to correct it. There was a clear and crying need for design systems so that it would no longer be necessary for public servants, many of them hopelessly unqualified in graphics, to design every two-bit pamphlet from the ground up.

A report on government publications asked how the reader sees his government and, here in the area of design as well, the quality of the Federal Government's image partly at stake:

"Over the years, we have watched the growth of such well-known corporate bodies as Olivetti, KLM, the London Transport and IBM. Their recognition throughout the world, and business success, can be attributed largely to good design philosophy, management and co-ordination. This same philosophy . . . should be applied to Canadian government work. The benefits to be gained are directly associated with the government's wishes to establish a stronger national identity. . . ."

It is worth remembering, in a discussion of design and the national identity, that although the famous CN "wreath" was the object of considerable ridicule only a few years ago it is now a proud and effective symbol, accepted in Canada and abroad, of one of the world's better railroads. It has given Canadian National a stamp on the public mind, and a fresher sort of drama than it had before. A discussion of graphic design in government might well be extended to include not just the visual feeling of publications and letterhead but also a symbol, or a pattern of symbols, or a pattern of visual effects that might proclaim the federal presence on trucks, cars, buildings, mailboxes, television commercials, newspaper ads, and so on.

"The Federal Government owns many offices and maintains real estate here in Quebec," says a federal public servant. "Is each a thoughtful, silent witness to a dynamic federal presence? Not likely. The most recent federal space to be occupied is decorated entirely with provincial postures. The only visual reminders of the federal presence in the two postal stations which I frequent are portraits of Queen Elizabeth II, which are probably as offensive artistically and politically to us Québécois. No Canadian flag. No attractive posters. No displays."

We'll return later to the matter of assertion of the federal presence but, for the moment, perhaps it is enough to observe that the competent use of language, and

onal standards of graphic design, are surely two of more obvious and straightforward ways by which a government could demonstrate to its people that sometimes it actually knows what it is doing.

Money, Money, Money

The matter of money, as in every other matter of concern in the information services, a loose and highly cavalier attitude at the top can spread down and infect the lower parts. Successive governments have failed to take the information function seriously enough even to give it definition in accounting, and it should therefore not be startling to learn that the bookkeeping practices of departments with respect to the information divisions are puzzling, somewhat amateurish, and occasionally downright weird. A study on one section of the information division of a large social-affairs department is educational in this respect. It found that:

Cost data are not sufficient to allow anyone to calculate real dollar costs of information programmes, and this means it is impossible to know how successful such programmes have been. If you don't know what you've spent for something, it is usually difficult to know whether it was worth it.

This section was slow to provide up-to-date figures on spending. The latest figures it could give the Task Force were for the fiscal year 1967-68. Estimates for the first nine months of 1968-69 would have been useful.

For 1967-68, this section budgeted to spend \$2,700 on advertising and publications. Instead, it spent \$211,165, or about 40 per cent of the budget. The following year, a similar bid for money was made, resulting in another surplus. For two years running then, there would appear to have been an incomprehensibly large plus, amounting altogether to more than \$589,535.

This section also has a strange idea of priorities. In budgeting, it has set up five categories as priorities. Yet, in its projections of spending for 1969-70, the fifth is listed as fifth and last in the order of priorities. It appears to be getting the second-most amount of money. On this list of budgeting priorities, fifth is second, fourth is fifth, and second is fourth, but third really third, and first is perfectly first. Perhaps there's a problem of communications here somewhere.

In investigation of government advertising also made oblique reference to insufficient cost data: "It was only with great difficulty that approximate figures

could be obtained of what the Government of Canada and its agencies spent on advertising and other promotional and information services. There do not appear to exist generally accepted definitions of what expenditures should be classified as advertising, what as information services, what as public relations and publicity material, and what as other promotional services . . . Such data are essential both for overall and specialized communication planning and the assessment of the effect of advertising expenditures made by government departments."

There is good reason for the considerable concern over so dry a matter as budgeting procedures in federal information. For, as far as the Task Force could gather, it is costing Canadians in 1969-70 as much as \$148,000,000, and that is a lot of income tax. We cannot be any more precise than that; nor, we believe, could any human.

Treasury Board has not required the departments to record all information costs as such. Each department records information costs in its own frequently whimsical way. It is a symptom of something, a symptom of the lack of any common system, in any area of professional endeavour among the assorted information divisions, that there is simply no generally accepted accounting procedure by which anyone can calculate exactly how much the Canadian Government spends on spreading and getting information.

Task Force researchers first sought the help of the Treasury Board, and the Auditor-General. They got co-operation but not all the figures they required. Next, they sent questionnaires on costs directly to 23 departments and 44 agencies and when the questionnaires also failed to elicit enough useful cost data, they visited some of the departments to interview information directors and financial officers. They concluded that "... the anomalies are as numerous as the departments and agencies" which means there could be 23, plus 44 anomalies. "It is apparent that any total cost, computed under the present system of accounting, can only be at best a general estimate of the cost of public information services, and that any analysis provided is partly based on 'guesstimates'. In order to be able to measure the efficiency of the information services in the future in relation to the dollar expended, it will be necessary, first to define information services, and second to record all information expenditure in sufficient detail that comparisons can be readily made between departments and agencies."

The report on the cost of information did, however, come up with some laboriously achieved and perhaps

roughly accurate figures. They showed that, in the 1969-70 budgets, there are more than \$60.5 million for the direct and clearly identified and evaluated information efforts in departments and agencies; and almost \$67.5 million for what the Task Force's accounting consultants regarded as indirect or "other" information services costs in departments and agencies; and more than \$20 million as a current annual figure for costs of advertising and information services in the Crown Corporations. Those three figures add up to about \$148 million.

Finally, one of the more intriguing cost comparisons that Task Force researchers drew was that, for the current fiscal year, National Defence has budgeted to spend \$4.9 million on their entire information programme (which includes at least \$1.7 million for information services) while the Dominion Bureau of Statistics expects to spend on its information division under half a million. There may indeed be very good reasons why National Defence, in peacetime, may be spending ten times as much money on information as DBS. Then again, there may not be. The point is that, without accurate and comparable figures, the discussion cannot even begin.

5. Agriculture, Meet Consumer Affairs, And Manpower, Please You Must Meet Unemployment Insurance

There's evidence that the programmes of information divisions may seriously overlap one another in some cases and, in others, not overlap enough. Both errors are a result of the failure of professional communicators to communicate with one another. An appraisal of information services in Agriculture reported that: "Traditional departments, such as Agriculture and Fisheries in particular, have difficulty identifying and serving their audiences. They have tended to define their audiences very broadly, and may be overlapping public information programmes originated by such departments as Regional Economic Expansion or Consumer Affairs."

At the same time, Manpower's pamphlets to explain the programme of Occupational Training for Adults were distributed only to the Manpower Centres, and not to the offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, or to local welfare offices. Unemployment was the highest among several OTA priorities but the department nevertheless failed to send the pamphlets to the places where the unemployed were most likely to see them.

6. Culture? What Culture?

Well, it's 20 years now since the Massey Report said that, in "the important national activity" of cultural information, Canada "has fallen behind other democratic countries, including some with smaller populations and much more limited resources." It's 20 years since the same report recommended that "the Canada Council proceed as rapidly as possible to establish a cultural information centre on those aspects of the arts, literature, humanities, and social sciences which fall within its competence." As rapidly as possible, the man said, and that was 20 years ago, and how much rapidity was possible? On the evidence of what has since been achieved, very little indeed.

In the past ten years, federal governments have spent hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars on people and equipment that are essential to the product of cultural activity, but it has not yet established anything like a real clearing-house for cultural information. One never wants to sound too crude in affairs cultural but, at the same time, one would think that if it's okay to spend vast sums of the public's money on the encouragement of artistic and cultural endeavour, then it should also be okay to spend a fair bit on telling the public how that investment is paying off.

Then there are all those foreign publics. One report argues that, "Nearly all the countries of the world – from novice and have-not countries, as well as the experienced and have countries – employ cultural information as an instrument to support basic public policies at home and abroad. Canada has always been, and still is, one of the world's backward nations in this respect." Nations that, only a few decades ago, were transmitting their cultural information on jungle drums, may now be ahead of us in their appreciation of the uses of this information in international diplomacy.

Huge sums of governmental and private money are expended on the cultural preoccupations of Canada, with immense and incalculable resources of human energy and talent. The provincial and local governments are deeply involved, as are the churches, universities, corporations, unions, professional associations, and an apparently infinite variety of cultural organizations, assemblages and cells. And the state of the Federal Government alone has a casual listing of Canadian Government agencies having a specific involvement in cultural activities and cultural information would include: the Departments of the Se-

of State, External Affairs, Manpower and Immigration, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Labour, Finance, Public Works, Post Office, National Health and Welfare, National Defence, Trade and Commerce, and Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Queen's Printer, Royal Canadian Mint, National Gallery, National Library, Public Archives, National Museums, National Film Board and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This is a massive involvement, in programme, personnel and finance and, for many years, it has been pathetically un-co-ordinated.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, until very recently, has seldom shown more than the slightest and most haphazard interest in cultural matters; it could tell you, among myriads of other fascinating things, how many people went to horse races last year, but it could not tell you how many went to symphony concerts. And the Canadian Council, despite the Massey Report's old and specific findings, has been uninspired in the whole matter of cultural information. A few years ago, along with the Canada Foundation, it did set up a Canadian Cultural Information Centre. But the CCIC was given more responsibility than money, and it foundered.

A comprehensive centre and clearing-house for information on all the cultural affairs of the country would help to nurture pride at home and a high image abroad while assisting Canadian artists as well. It would bring a sense of order to the crazy variety of cultural activities under the various departments of the Federal Government. It would require the fair co-operation of the provinces, and astute powers in the arts of wooing support from all the private cultural organizations in the country. This is a large order, but it is also 20 years overdue.

Social Surveys, The Public Mind, and The Late George Orwell

In the United States, Great Britain, France, India, Sweden and Japan are a few of the countries in which professionally conducted surveys of the people's opinions and attitudes are now regarded as routine tools of democratic government. In the public service of Canada, however, there's still a wide-spread suspicion of social surveys. The suspicion is based partly on a mystifying ignorance of developments in the social sciences in other countries; but the meat of it seems to be that governments may use social surveys in improper political ways, ways that would pass the Member of Parliament in his rôle as a filter

to the government for public opinion, ways that are mysterious and factious and dangerously sure to confirm power. There's a difficult paradox in all this: the suspicion is based on a fear of the perversion of democracy but, at the same time, it would deny the people full participation in democracy. Democratic government is one of those rare fields of human endeavour in which men offer moral justification for the preservation of inefficiency, and the suspicion of social surveys arises from the idea that it is really quite wrong for a people's government to know a lot about what the people are thinking and what the people are wanting. It reminds us of something George Orwell wrote in March of 1947:

"Some people do seem sincerely to feel that it is a bad thing for the government to know too much about what people are thinking, just as others feel that it is a kind of presumption when the government tries to educate public opinion. Actually you can't have democracy unless both processes are at work. Democracy is only possible when the law-makers and administrators know what the masses want, and what they can be counted on to understand. . . ."

Still, quite a few departments and agencies of the Canadian Government do buy opinion and attitude surveys from time to time. These departments, however, do not always tell one another what they're doing, and therefore only God knows how extensively the surveys overlap one another, or even how many of them there are in any week or year or generation. The United States Government has enforced an effective co-ordination of all its massive survey work for more than a quarter of a century but, in Canada, the attitude of many public servants (and, presumably, of the Ministers they serve) toward the idea of some central direction of survey work was glumly expressed by a senior departmental research officer who said, "Only outsiders, like Task Forces, see the need for an over-view."

In 1962, the Glassco Report on government organization remarked on the duplication of the survey work that the government had undertaken. In 1966, the Management Analysis Division of the Civil Service Commission noted the "extensive duplication" and, following that, Treasury Board issued a directive, MI-11-66, that was supposed to bring the survey work of all departments under the general guidance of the Dominion Statistician. The departments, as a whole, have seldom observed the directive with care and, since about 1967, they've become increasingly negligent in their duty to report their surveys to DBS. There

are a number of reasons for the practical collapse of this effort to bring order into the survey work of the government. One of the more interesting ones is that MI-11-66 is a bad piece of writing.

We quote from a Task Force investigation:

"A Bureau of Statistics spokesman commented on the vagueness of the directive's wording, a matter which was elaborated upon by a Management Improvement Branch official at the Treasury Board. The official said the directive lacks both clarity and directness, and needs to be rewritten to cover various uncertainties and some apparent loopholes."

The directive fails to mention continuing surveys, surveys conducted by the provinces with federal money, or surveys that universities and private survey firms undertake for the government. (One cannot suppress a passing and uncharitable thought: if the government is incapable of making its intentions clear, even in its directions to itself, what hope has it got of ever making them clear to the general public?)

There were other reasons why MI-11-66 became ineffectual. Deputy Ministers may simply have failed to tell their research staff about their obligation to keep DBS informed. Moreover, the Task Force was told, the departments, "Often don't like the implications of central control." DBS itself "has never taken a very strong stand on the directive because we are concerned about our relations with the departments." Relations within the Holy Roman Empire are most delicate, don't you know?

DBS, incidentally, has not only been unable to coordinate whatever survey work has been done in other departments, it has also abysmally failed to systematically undertake much public opinion or attitude surveying of its own. The Bureau has not categorically refused to do such surveying, it's just that they regard it as controversial, and their main concern is facts, and they've a shortage of qualified staff, and anyway "... there are certain attitude and opinion questions which it would be most inappropriate for a government organization to ask."

It's all very understandable but the trouble is, there are also a whole lot of attitude and opinion questions which it would indeed be most appropriate for a government to ask, and at the moment no one is asking them. The monthly Canadian Labour Force survey of 30,000 Canadian households closely resembles the United States' Current Population Survey, but the Canadian survey does not ask respondents for their attitudes and opinions. The American one does and, the U.S. Bureau of the Census

has also made specific survey enquiries into the causes of poverty, the effects of racial discrimination, the success or failure of such specific programmes as Medicare, and projects under the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the attitudes of draft-age men towards service in the armed forces. The U.S. Bureau recognizes that "... there are certain attitude and opinion questions which it would be most inappropriate for a government organization to ask," and it solves this ticklish problem in an amazingly simple way. It doesn't ask them. It refuses to handle "politically improper questions" — such as how the public regards a piece of legislation that's currently before Congress — and it refuses to ask questions that it thinks might invade personal privacy.

The Swedish Central Bureau of Statistics, to take a more foreign example, has its own Survey Research Institute and, in recent years, the Institute has surveyed public opinion of the national health insurance scheme; it has studied the consumption of alcoholic beverages and public attitudes towards booze; it has made an annual study of the habits and opinions of radio and television audiences and it has surveyed public attitudes to the country's change from left-hand to right-hand road travel. It is difficult to see the impropriety of such research. Indeed, to quote the American scholar of social surveys, Harry Alpert, "Firm, reliable knowledge about man and society, including an understanding of the nature of opinions, attitudes, emotions and connected psychological and social processes is not a luxury to be indulged in casually when other more significant things are ended. It is a necessary condition of human society in the complex world we have created." Canadian scholars are equally aware of this. John Porter wrote in a recent article, "Of all modern nations Canada is perhaps the most difficult in which to search for a distinct national character. One can only plead again the almost total absence of data with which to provide profiles of major or minor value patterns."

In view of such opinions, and in view of the lack of programmes of social surveys in other countries, it is all the more depressing to find that in this field, too, the information efforts of the Federal Government of Canada have sunk dismally into the familiar pattern of anachronism, excessive caution and administrative chaos. The government has been painfully slow to adopt a technique of hearing the people that is a normal part of the democratic process in other countries and, on those occasions that it has adopted the technique, it has done so under circumstances

ences of extraordinary confusion. Perhaps things will change, and so far as that elderly suspicion is concerned — the one about the threat that lurks in government exploitation of social surveys — there is no reason why both the fact of all government-sponsored surveys, and the results of them, should not be made public knowledge. That way, everyone, even an official Opposition, might profit by whatever insights into the public and the surveys happen to provide.

Pick A Title, Any Title

The National Union Catalogue at the National Library has about 10 million books in about 275 government, university, public and special libraries. Of the 275, at least 48 are Government libraries in Ottawa that are grouped among 34 different departments and agencies. A distinguished municipal librarian says that, so far as the government's own voluminous publishing efforts are concerned, "... anything approaching a scientific quantitative or qualitative assessment ... in the broad political, scientific, economic, social or cultural fields is currently impossible." The reason such an assessment is impossible is that there are perhaps 60,000 titles in 17 annual catalogues of Canadian Government publications, and they are not computerized.

DBS, The QP, And We're Awfully Sorry, What Next Year Do?

Two of the more famous and justly respected of all the institutions of Canadian Government are the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the Queen's Printer. Both of these venerable agencies have provided services of great integ-

At the same time, when the Task Force interviewed dozens of businessmen and journalists and academics and others who might be regarded as leaders of Canadian opinion, we found that these very institutions were frequent targets of criticism and, in some cases, of vigorous abuse. Again, space limitations require us to simplify the complaints in a fairly gross way.

First, the Queen's Printer. It struck many opinion leaders as frankly incredible that the Federal Government had the shops of the Queen's Printer to remarkably feeble. These stores could have been regional centres for distribution of all the Federal Government information that had appeared in print, but they were not. They could have distributed all the free information that was published

by all the departments of government, but they did not.

There might be many more of them in the country than there are, and it might even be possible to tell the general public about the stores that already exist. The fact that there's even such a thing as a Queen's Printer bookshop in Toronto is known to few Toronto people and, although the Queen's Printer publishes a variety of excellent little pamphlets on such specifics as "Control of mites in the home," "Growing strawberries in eastern Canada" and "What to eat before baby's born," not many people know about these publications, and that they are free. Not even very many would-be mite-killers know about them, nor strawberry-growers, nor prospective mothers. The QP hasn't an advertising budget that even a mite would bother with.

The more important publications of the Queen's Printer are also quaintly under-publicized. "Incredibly," we were told, "... the publicity section now has no capacity for such activity. In fact, no news releases of any description are done. Of the books distributed free to the media, about five per cent result in published reviews"

Other complaints against government publishing included the inadequacy of departmental subject catalogues, "... which are published many years behind schedule"; daily bulletins that arrive ten days late; generally inadequate indexing; the fact that many important federal publications have not been consolidated in nearly 15 years; the fact that the annual cumulations of the Daily Checklist of government publications are out-of-date even before they get into print; the needless assortment of authorities that issue government documents; the excessively short printing runs, and excessively long production delays; and, finally, the red and very sticky tape involved in so routine a process as ordering a book.

"The Queen's Printer," testifies one regular user of its services, "is a repository for all sorts of information about the government of Canada and its activities. That being the case, why on earth is the acquisition of its products surrounded by such extreme hocus pocus? Ordering a pamphlet involves an immense amount of form-filling and fiddling around, all of it prepaid. Regular ordering can only be done sensibly by setting up a deposit account, which is convenient enough for those of us with offices, secretaries and accounting procedures, but must be utterly baffling to individual members of the public. A handful of cities have Queen's Printer's bookstores but, in the rest, one is lucky to find any range of these publications at all. Again, we have a situation where the information

is indeed there, and available, but needless obstacles are placed in the path of its transmission."

The complaints against DBS were often more deeply felt than the ones against the Queen's Printer. The overwhelming one was that it is incomprehensibly slow to get some of its series out to the businessmen and financial writers who need them most. There was, in addition, serious criticism that DBS publications fail to serve the demands of many special publics. In population figures, for instance, it lumps Indians and Eskimos together and, for the smaller ethnic groups and religions, it offers no figures at all. Such complaints, however, were relatively mild compared to those concerning plain tardiness.

Some business leaders claimed that DBS figures were frequently so late that their usefulness was doubtful. One businessman stated, "We are still (January 9, 1969) awaiting the publication of the DBS report on 1966 operations of the pulp and paper industry, although the figures it will contain were made available to us for one of our publications six months ago The last updated catalogue came out in 1964." DBS works so slowly in some fields that a financial writer says he frequently gets his figures somewhere else and then, when DBS does report them, he writes in his column, "DBS confirmed yesterday" In the United States, he says, the quarterly reports of the government's statistical service are available a week after the quarter ends; in Canada, DBS does not get its quarterly reports out until the end of the following quarter. There were even harsher opinions about the availability of education statistics.

It may be that the sort of men who are most dependent on DBS for the success of their work also tend to be more articulate and effectively critical than Canadians as a whole but, whatever the reason, the response to the Task Force interest in the Bureau was uniquely spirited, inventive, and tough. (It was, incidentally, appreciative of the problems that face DBS as well. "Delays in reply," one businessman said, "are a minor factor compared with the staffing problem of the Bureau.")

As in virtually every other area of information effort in the Federal Government, there's a profound failure of co-ordination, and it seriously afflicts the collection of statistical information. The failure involves data collected by other departments of the Federal Government, and by the provincial and municipal governments as well. The plain inefficiency of it all can be intensely irritating to a significant part of the public. Businesses were eager to convey that the duplication of effort in the collection of statistical

data frequently bogs them down in the filling out of form

10. Government Advertising, And That Sturdy Old Pork Barrel

It is difficult ever to be precise about the cost of any aspect of the federal information services, but it's probable that the government spends about \$25 million a year on assignments to advertising agencies. That is a considerable amount of bread, and some of the conclusions reached in an intensive Task Force investigation into government advertising are therefore peculiarly alarming. "But a large part of departmental advertising is inherently, ineffective, unplanned, unco-ordinated and wasteful. Political interference, bureaucratic high-handedness and lack of know-how have contributed to making government advertising — with some notable exceptions — a system that does not compare well at all with that of most other industrialized nations." The comparison, from Canada's point of view, is most outrageously embarrassing in the matter of patronage, and here we can do better than offer this fairly long quote from the research report on government advertising:

"Patronage is the main basis of selecting advertising agencies to work for government departments and agencies It is based on returning a favour for a favour. Advertising agencies help a political party and some of the leading figures during election time. If the party returned to office, the agencies concerned are given a share of the advertising business of the government. Some advertising agencies which have large government accounts do not quite approve of this system, preferring to be chosen on a merit basis rather than getting the business via the proverbial pork barrel. For the winds of favour are fickle"

"A survey (specifically undertaken for this study) of 61 advertising agencies, national and regional, large and small, indicated a vote of four to one in favour of a merit system to replace the existing patronage system. And the majority included a number of national agencies which currently do advertising work for the Canadian Government. Government advertising is one of the bastions of patronage in Canada — a relic that has outlived its usefulness. Britain has done away with patronage advertising. So has the United States. And so have most other industrialized countries. The question facing the Government is whether it should now make a clean break and apply principles to ensure that efficiency and

ublic interest will guide the use of public spending on advertising as part of a total programme of communication. The answer given in this study is: Yes."

A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words, You Can Find It

More than half of the dozen-odd information divisions studied under one Task Force project had photographic sections and, among those that did, some had large and sophisticated photo establishments, and some simply had cameras that ISOS carried around with them. There is no central catalogue of all Federal Government photo collections. Nor, in some cases, are there even any central departmental catalogues to organize all the photographs that are lying around in the assorted collections within one department. In the Dominion Bureau of Statistics to take one example, there is little internal organization of prints, and there's none at all in the information division DBS. Negatives are usually kept by the National Film Board, or by outside photographers; prints are scattered throughout the division.

Has Anyone Here Heard About This Funny Invention? It's Called Television

We are all well into it now, well into the age of electro-miracles in communications, and this country has always had to be something of a pioneer in matters of communication. We were great railroaders. We were among the first people to toy with radio. We've had the PC for a third of a century. The dubious marvel of television has been with us for 16 years, and there are stranger marvels to come. The current Minister of Communications said last fall, "We are today in the process of running a communications satellite system; beyond this, we know, there will be a second generation of communications satellites able to beam broadcasts directly into homes. We will have to consider the technological potential of laser beams operating at frequencies of trillions of cycles a second in contrast to the frequencies of billions of cycles a second in broad-band radio communications . . ." Right. The age of communications miracles is upon us, and everyone knows it. And yet, throughout vast areas of the jungle of federal information services, print is still king, and information officers and their superiors still think of their publicity functions almost entirely in terms of press releases to daily newspapers. In some information

divisions, it is as though television, film, and other audio-visual techniques and aspects of contemporary technology had simply never come into existence. It is enough to make one suspect that federal officials are still sending stuffed moose-heads to London. It is enough to make one give credence to all those unfair generalizations about "the civil service mentality."

As far back as 1928, the Federal Government had built and was operating about 50 radio-telegraph stations as aids to navigation, and the events that led to the establishment of the CBC occurred in the late Twenties and early Thirties. Someone in the government knew something about radio. But, so far as the information efforts of the various departments were concerned, it scarcely seemed to exist. An exception, perhaps, was Trade and Commerce which, oddly enough, came to life in the depression and spent \$350,000 a year between 1936 and 1938 on a radio programme in England. It was called "Canada Calling" and, among other promotion efforts, it encouraged British grocers to stock Canadian food (perhaps maple sugar, made by French-Canadian lumberjacks in their spare time and who, in their picturesque Canadian way, said, "By gar, she is some sweet little sugar"). In any event, according to research into the history of the information services, the rule regarding the government's use of radio in the Thirties was "cautious experiment" and ". . . the use of radio by government departments . . . began to develop in the post-war period." That's the *second* post-war period; and some time after Franklin Delano "Fireside Chat" Roosevelt had died.

Later, a similar timidity hampered, and still hampers, the use of television to convey what government departments might want to tell the public. The report quoted above also says that, here in the late Sixties, almost two decades after the effective birth of television, ". . . an attitude of cautious experimentation is slowly shifting as information units seek to reach diverse publics." Several information divisions do use television quite frequently now but, in the opinion of many people, including information officers, the shifting is too slow and the experimentation still too cautious. The caution, perhaps, is inspired in part by the failure of successive administrations to deal with the matter of televising and broadcasting the proceedings in the House of Commons.

One young Information Service Officer says that, "Following Expo, audio-visual (techniques) took on a great deal more meaning . . . We have entered the world of sound-synchronized film and slide presentations using

multi-screen, split-screen, or rear-projection viewing, shown on anything from two to 18 projectors, all automatically controlled by a thing called a programmer equipped with a dissolve control. Sounds confusing, doesn't it? Well it is, and it also takes an electronics expert to run it. Which we are not . . . It is indeed unfortunate that so many senior government officials feel that any of the media that cannot be served with a standard press release are not worth our time or trouble."

It is impossible to know exactly how many press releases will leave federal government offices every day. Certainly, there are enough of them — and many are so useless, so irrelevant to anyone's needs and, ultimately, so irritating to receive that many of those people who regularly receive the releases describe them in the sort of language that one normally associates with outrage over something as shocking as, say, the Mafia in the United States. The press releases are "a national disgrace," or "a scandal." Their dollar cost, in terms of paper, postage, and the salaries of the people who hammer them out and edit them, was raised recently in a question in the House and is not inconsiderable. For all those who are pleased to define government administrations as automatically and inherently wasteful, there could be no more consistent and meatier proof than the relentless daily flood of press releases from Ottawa. Some of them wing their way, year after year, to the old addresses of editors who have long been in their graves, and to publications that no longer exist. Judging from the testimony of many journalists, the instant destiny of tons upon tons of this "junk mail" is the wastebasket. It's good for the scrap-paper trade, and it keeps a lot of janitors busy at the incinerator.

Aside from the vast number of the press releases, which alone is enough to discourage their serious study by editors, they are generally too vague and too outdated to suit the highly local needs of the news business. They seldom answer local questions. Moreover, in many departments, press releases may not be issued until their language has been approved at assorted levels of officialdom. In one department, the releases must be authorized at no fewer than six different levels. This system guarantees that the releases will be too late to do any publication any good, and too pompous to hold anyone's attention. It is a reflection of the traditional bureaucratic conservatism that has hamstrung government information services for decades.

One might think that pomposity, vagueness, fuzziness of focus, failure to fulfil local information needs, and

absurdly massive quantity are an impressive enough list of flaws but, in fact, they do not really do justice to the full failure of many government press releases. An editor who is on the receiving end of a lot of stuff from the Department of Agriculture, offered a neat elaboration:

"Much of the information we receive is useless repetitive. We are told year after year when Canadian crops are available, and this rarely varies. The November 1968 Department of Agriculture bulletin told us how to freeze a casserole, and how to use cut-up chicken. The first item is very dated and generally well-known, and the second was dealt with much more capably by a poultry products bulletin in October 1967 . . . Now information is not given to the press fast enough, and often not at all . . . When we get information, it is not current, nor does it reflect what the public wants to know."

Press releases, almost by definition, irritate radio and television professionals. They are not fond of the jargon of the newspaper business, such instructions as "Hold for Release in PMS," or even the phrase "Press Release" itself. An announcement that the Minister So-and-So today said such-and-such-and-such may not be of great value to them. Some complained that, generally speaking, government information officers were still living in a world dominated by printer's ink, and that such isos lacked both the training and the inclination to understand the techniques and requirements of audio-visual journalism. There are isos, for instance, who are not aware in any practical way that radio and television journalists need advance notice of announcements, a little time to bring their equipment into action. "I would like all information officers to understand the practical need of covering a story for radio and television news," one audio-visual man said. "Thus, they would be in a position to release the story and make the arrangements for us to film and tape, where necessary, to give us an equal break with the written press."

A Task Force investigation of Canadian Government advertising noted a comfortably traditional relations between politicians and newspapers in Canada; and, though many of the information officers are themselves former newspapermen. They ". . . would not be particularly well equipped to formulate a judgement as between conflict claims of services and performance made by different media." Speaking of communication, what that means is that your average ex-newspaperman is not necessarily smart enough to know when a television commercial will suit his purposes better than a newspaper ad.

he report on government advertising continues: responsible officials in many government departments not too familiar with the workings of television, and potential of this medium to communicate with the public . . . Thus, little distinction is being made between taping a film about a story a government wishes to tell the public, as against taping a live show for television viewing. In fact, it is a ruling governing the operations of the National Film Board that, where possible, the facilities of the Board are used. Thus departments are encouraged from either going to the CBC or to private television stations to tape a live show, or to produce a "commercial." The report suggests the government badly needs some advertising expertise on staff and some people who know something about how to use television skilfully; at the same time, there's a fair bit of evidence in the higher reaches of at least some government departments that the advertising industry is itself still regarded as new-fangled to be trustworthy. Like that new radio station with the moving picture right there in your own sitting room.

A clear indication that the government information services are less than zestful to embrace the century's more recent techniques of communication lies in what they spend on the various media. As far as the Task Force could gather, the information divisions of the departments and agencies of the Federal Government are currently spending close to \$19 million a year on the production of their own publications but only slightly more than four million on audio-visual presentations. Even one remembers that it costs considerably more to do something on television than it does to say it in print, four million appears smaller still.

The conservatism of the government information services with regard to radio and television and film is matched – in a way that we have come to expect, if not prove – by a lack of common policy, of planning, and of interdepartmental liaison concerning audio-visual techniques and services and facilities. Not long ago, two Ministers of the Federal Cabinet were involved in a controversy over the fact that they had taped the announcement of an important government decision a few days before the Commons had heard about it. They had used radio facilities of a private television station because, so as they knew, there were no adequate studios in any department of government. Neither Minister was the Minister of Agriculture. If one had been, it is just possible I have known that the Canadian Department of Agri-

culture has adequate facilities for television production, and somewhat better than adequate facilities for radio production.

Its equipment for taping and radio broadcasting is as good as that of many private radio stations and, indeed, there are some technical aspects in which the operation surpasses much of the CBC radio facility in Toronto, Agriculture produces its own taped news clips for telephone transmissions to radio stations across the country, its own television film clips and even, on occasion, its own feature films. There is simply no government policy, however, to define the uses of these facilities, and not much of a departmental policy either and, in the words of one report, "What exists now is impressive in terms of day to day policy but somewhat disturbing in the possibilities that are clear for rampant activity without proper policy direction in the future."

If the Department does not happen to be using its audio-visual facilities, and everyone's in a good mood, it may allow information divisions from other government departments to use them. (It might even have allowed those two Cabinet Ministers into one of its studios for a while.) "It is difficult to rationalize the almost total lack of adequate or minimal audio-visual services within other departments with Agriculture's facilities," says one Task Force investigation. "Why should Agriculture be expanding so quickly . . . while others live in a state of deprivation? If the Government of Canada is going to spend funds on audio-visual facilities, Agriculture's success becomes a genuine indication of failure to accommodate the general needs of all departments."

There is a strong possibility that in at least some cases the audio-visual productions of the Department of Agriculture are fulfilling no particular needs except the need of radio stations to fill time and, perhaps, the need of information staff to wield equipment because, like the proverbial mountain, it is there. There is a chance that, after a while, an information division will tend to make almost exclusive use of the instrument with which it is most familiar. The instrument could be television or, far more likely, the daily newspaper but, in either case, the decision may not really have had very much to do with reaching anyone. The way to reach some special public might properly involve both media, or something quite different from either one of them. One of the sadder difficulties that have afflicted the federal information services is that departmentalization has applied to their efforts not only in the obvious sense of the loyalties in the assorted

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government departments but also in a rigid mental separation of the tools of communication. The answer lies in some new sort of administrative machine to bring about an integrated approach to communicating with the Canadian publics of our time.

The arrival of the computer and other products of the new technology makes the adoption of a total-communications approach imperative. They have tremendous ramifications for communications. The government must recognize that, unless it handles the expensive new hardware and software with considerable care and planning, it may mess up the new technology even more thoroughly than it has messed up the old. It is one thing to send out too many press releases; it's another to waste computer time.

We'll leave the subject with a final example of the late and lingering uncertainty among many government information people concerning all forms of communication that are more modern than the printed word, still pictures, and mirrors on mountaintops. An employee of the National Film Board told us, "In one small mission I visited, the distribution of films was entrusted to the locally employed girl who ran the switchboard; in another embassy, the woman in charge of films proudly showed me a list of NFB films she had selected to screen at a high-powered regional trade fair; needless to say, she had chosen some of our Eskimo and Indian epics to show to the industrial buyers who would be attending the fair . . ." Somebody should have put out a press release about that lady, and maybe somebody did.

Canada has a variety of special publics, not only within our country but outside our borders as well, and the more proudly we tell these foreign publics about ourselves the better we serve ourselves. To a large degree, we depend on our survival as a nation on our relations with other countries. As long ago as 1932, Sir Stephen Tallents wrote, in *The Projection of England*, that "No civilized country today can afford either to neglect the projection of its national personality or to resign its projection to others." If that were true 27 years ago, it is even more true today, and yet at least one civilized country, our own, has failed to turn Sir Stephen's message into anything like an efficient system of information services abroad.

It is fair to observe, however, that although Canada has tried to create a smoothly functioning system of information services abroad, the picture is not exclusively gloomy, and the information efforts of assorted individual departments are far from entirely fumbling. The Department of External Affairs, to take a central example, sponsors the distribution of National Film Board movies and, in 1968, had equipped 92 missions with film libraries and it held 478 screenings. The quality of National Film Board movies is acknowledged wherever movies are seen, and last year they were apparently seen by no less than six million people. Thanks to recent government support, in particular from the Cultural Affairs Division of External Affairs, Canadian cultural events have begun to occur more and more frequently in Europe. Moreover, External Affairs has a fairly extensive publications programme and, though the programme does suffer fairly severe problems of budget and manpower, its work may be regarded neither stagnant nor utterly ineffective. Some of its publications are demonstrably effective overseas projections of aspects of the Canadian image. External Affairs' programme of exhibits, produced by the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, now covers every country in which there is Canadian representation. Its programmes of sponsored visits of foreign journalists has increased sevenfold in four years.

In several other departments and agencies of the Government, separate programmes of information abroad have achieved significant successes. They have contributed to the attraction of immigrants, the growth of foreign trade, and the profitable lure of Canada of tourists from many countries. However, even if we were to cite every of the sweetest evidence about the co-ordination of information abroad, we would still be left with the ines-

capable impression that, as a whole, our information abroad has long been stumbling through a stunning sort of chaos. Our missions, more often than not, receive the policy statements of their own government only after they've appeared on press wire services (if, indeed, they've appeared at all). And even in Ottawa, the External Affairs Press Office, which is responsible for dispatching these statements abroad, frequently finds that its first sight of them occurs in the local newspapers. We have only a handful of professional full-time press officers abroad. We have virtually no funds to hire highly qualified local help abroad on a continuing basis. We have few prestige periodicals to show foreigners. We make noises about our growing interest in Latin America, but we offer no high-quality periodical in Spanish. We produce the *Canadian Weekly Bulletin* but, by any standards, it is a drab publication and its circulation, the world over, is fewer than 10,000 copies. We project the image of our political life with a film produced a dozen years ago. And basic to all this is the fact that every attempt to set up lasting co-ordination of our information programmes abroad has miserably flopped.

Technically, the chief responsibility for the chaos lies with the Department of External Affairs but the structure — if we may use so firm and so hard a word to describe so soft a situation — the structure of the information services abroad is so diffuse that it would be brutally over-simple to direct the exclusive blame at any one department. Indeed, it is the Department's claim that they have been denied the necessary funds for an adequate structure to service the programmes.

The respect, however, with which professional information officers in other departments regard the information efforts of External Affairs is, to put it as diplomatically as possible, not outstandingly high. Moreover, the respect with which most of the brass of External Affairs have regarded the information function in their own department is so low, even by government standards, that it appears to have infected the entire department with anti-information sentiment. It has inspired most of the brighter boys in External to avoid the Information Division as though service there amounted to an official reprimand. All of this has led to a sort of aimlessness, and a bungling of detail that, despite the occasionally valiant and brilliant efforts of individual public servants, can sometimes turn a programme to project the Canadian image abroad into a pathetic shambles.

The shambles are not solely the fault of any particular

department or any particular regime in the Information Division of External Affairs. It is difficult enough even to define such regimes. The Glassco Commission reported a few years ago that, in 17 years, there'd been 14 successive directors of the Information Division and ". . . in one calendar year, no fewer than 23 staff changes were made." The present head of the Division has held the position for more than three years, and that may be a longevity record. At lower levels, the rate at which officers are switched in and out of the Division continues to be ludicrously hectic.

No, the shambles, and the musical chairs as well, arise not so much from personality flaws but from an atmosphere of purposelessness. The atmosphere has grown and established itself, because governments that have been prepared to spend millions of dollars a year on information have never given External Affairs the means to impose workable machinery for interdepartmental co-ordination of information efforts abroad and because External Affairs has never fully exploited the mandate it had. Furthermore, governments have never given External Affairs, or any other department for that matter, a clear-cut policy on government information and these departments have not bothered to establish one of their own. It is an "abomination," says a senior government official, that for the past 20 years information efforts have been carried out abroad without a general policy, or even a semblance of a master plan.

External Affairs' information function is to provide a programme of basic information on Canada for foreign consumption. This broad programme is designed to fortify and underpin information programmes that have such specific objectives as increasing exports, selling Oka cheese, recruiting immigrants, luring tourists, and drumming up support for our foreign policies.

All of the departments concerned with such goals agree that they do require a basic general information programme to support their more specific efforts. They have representatives, along with External Affairs, on something called an Interdepartmental Committee on Information Abroad but, under the current rules the Committee isn't doing much co-ordinating. External Affairs is supposed to co-ordinate government information services abroad but, at the same time, the other departments and agencies are not under any obligation to submit to External Affairs' or the Committee's decisions. Indeed, a Cabinet decision of 1965 states specifically that each department or agency retains the responsibility for all information activities related to its own objectives.

The Departments of External Affairs, Industry, Trade and Commerce, Manpower and Immigration, the International Service of the CBC, the Canadian International Development Agency, and the Canadian Government Travel Bureau are all more or less independently involved in projecting Canada abroad under the ineffectual co-ordination of the Interdepartmental Committee on Information Abroad.

One indication of exactly how ineffectual the co-ordination has been is that in the past two decades, the only proposal that the Interdepartmental Committee ever made to a Canadian Cabinet concerned not so vital a decision about an overseas information programme but merely revisions of its own terms of reference. Until recently, the Committee had no permanent secretariat to give its deliberations continuity.

"The lack of co-ordination at posts", says one source, "can range from the Travel Bureau's preparing a large promotional effort in Boston with the consulate being advised accidentally, to one department in Paris refusing to participate in an exhibition staged by another, to the ludicrous situation such as exists at the New York Consulate-General, where each department has its own individual storage rooms holding almost identical stock."

The files of the Task Force are rich in minor tragedies and low comedies that have occurred as a result of confusion of focus in Canadian information efforts overseas and, if one can bring enough detachment to them, they make entertaining reading. We have room to mention only three cases here:

1. For a great many years Canadian Government information officers in other countries have been working to correct a cliché image of Canada that is irritating to Canadians and hardy as a weed. This is the Canada of Rose Marie and Maria Chapdelaine, land of ice, snow, Mounties, Eskimos and not much else. Then along came the Centennial and Expo, and they helped to brighten up the old image. Somehow, however, in this isolated case anyway, the International Service of the CBC failed to get the message. It put out a special winter Centennial schedule of programmes, and distributed it to countries around the world. The programme included coloured illustrations of the Parliament Buildings in winter; prairie wheat fields; a hockey game; the Fathers of Confederation; a winter landscape; the musical ride of the RCMP, and a Canadian Indian in ceremonial dress. And be sure to bring your skis on Dominion Day.

The campaign against seal hunting in the Gulf of Lawrence has been one of the more persistent targets of the Canadian image. A Task Force study says "harmful not only to Canada's image abroad but has effects on more specific Canadian objectives. This group of school children picketed the Canadian Government Travel Bureau office in Paris with placards made up of Air Canada ads and pictures of the seal hunt during 'travel to Canada . . . and see this.' That, perhaps, that Sir Stephen Tallents meant by resigning the protection of one's national image to others.

Canadian information people, at various foreign missions, had already taken considerable pains to interpret the Federal Government's stand on the tricky matter of seal hunt in the Gulf. Then, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development issued a press release explaining the effect of the anti-sealing campaign on market price of seal pelts from the Arctic! Their timing was extraordinary; the release succeeded in drawing public attention to one more area of Canada where men kill, and offered a fine new target for attacks. The release mentioned that Indian Affairs, for itself, really did want to comment on the "controversial" hunt in the Gulf, and thereby cannily implied that the Gulf hunt was particularly vulnerable to criticism. Unfortunately, by this time, the Government was busily trying to defend the

Canadian posts abroad were furnished with backgrounders to answer criticism of the seal hunt, and they were already engaged in interpreting the Government's stand in foreign countries when the Minister of Fisheries stated publicly that he was considering abolishing the hunt entirely. No matter what one thought of the seal hunt, there were no two ways to regard the timing and coordination of Canadian Government information on the matter.

The Ministerial Mission to Latin America would leave Canada in late October of 1968, and, as early as possible, government officials began to make arrangements for it, at least, to think about making arrangements for it. External Affairs was to do the co-ordinating, but no overall co-ordinator of press and publicity arrangements for the Mission was appointed. From that beginning, the story becomes one of accelerating confusion but, to be fair, it is typical of all missions abroad. The number of Ministers participating and the number of countries on the itinerary made the Latin American Mission an exceptional one. Its precise composition and its exact itinerary were

not cleared for announcement until three days before its departure, but it was certain that both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs felt that the Mission had great potential as an exercise in public relations. They wanted it to be planned thoroughly and imaginatively and, almost immediately, the great wheels and cogs and gears of our federal machine were set in motion to guarantee that public relations for the trip would be planned both unthoroughly and unimaginatively.

External Affairs called a meeting of most of the departments and agencies that were concerned with the Mission. They called themselves the Sub-committee on Press, Publicity and Information of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Ministerial Mission to Latin America, and they met for the first time on September 18. As things turned out, that was also the last time they met. The Secretary of State was a member of the Mission, and the Export Credit Insurance Corporation was involved in it as well, but for one obscure reason or another, representatives of neither of them were invited to the meeting on September 18.

The meeting recommended that the Prime Minister should be the one to announce the Mission, that a press briefing be held before the Mission took off for Latin America, and that each department and agency should prepare its own contribution to the briefing. They would all send this stuff to the co-ordinator of press and publicity. He was a foreign service officer in External's Latin American Division, and receiving these notes for the press briefing appears to have been about the extent of his duties as a co-ordinator.

Twelve seats on the ministerial plane were to be available to newsmen. Despite a general appeal to the Press Gallery and specific representations to the CBC and Canadian Press, scarcely any news media accepted the offer to send journalists along for the whole ride. The press appeared to be unwilling to spare experienced journalists for the month required for the trip, and to incur the expenses amounting to perhaps \$1,000 per man. The CP decided not to send its own man but, rather, to ask its allies, AP and Reuters, to provide reports from local stringers.

The story grows increasingly messy. Trade and Commerce felt that it was impossible for one publicity officer to handle all duties for an interdepartmental mission and, therefore, when External Affairs did agree to send along an official from its own Press Office as well, Trade and Commerce was happy. Almost on the eve of the Mission's departure, however, External Affairs decided that, since

the press contingent was turning out to be so disappointingly small, there was scarcely any need for them to send a press officer. The one man from Trade and Commerce now found himself with the main responsibility for all publicity during the Mission's tour. No one had been sent ahead of the official party to set things up with the newsmen in Latin America, and the Trade and Commerce man ended up working 18 hours a day during the Mission, mostly with the Latin American press.

But let us return, for a moment, to the quiet fiasco of September 18, which among other things was supposed to prepare for a press conference on the eve of the Mission's departure. The meeting agreed that all the departments and agencies that were involved should immediately begin to prepare their separate efforts for the press briefing, and that they should get them over to External in the first week of October.

In fact some of the more important material arrived at the last possible moment, and its translation into French was uncheckered. As members of the press filed into the conference room on October 24, officials were still hastily stuffing the folders with briefing material. They could complete none of the French folders. Some of these lacked the Prime Minister's statement. All of them lacked one of the background notes which arrived after the conference had started. Included in the material however, were copies of *Canada, the Bountiful Land*. Unfortunately, they were intended for distribution not at the press conference but in Latin America.

Two of the five Ministers involved in the Mission were unable to leave the Commons to attend the conference. The other three each spoke for a couple of minutes and then just as the press were getting ready to ask some questions, the division bells in the House of Commons rang and the three Ministers had to leave.

There was not much anyone could do about that but, in the weeks that followed, other little publicity disasters plagued the Ministerial Mission and many of these were of the sort that might have been averted under an efficient system.

Later, the Task Force commissioned a detailed account of the information efforts in Canada of the Ministerial Mission to Latin America. It learned from officials interviewed in External Affairs, Trade and Commerce and the Secretary of State's Department, that they were content with the results achieved in Latin America, but that they agreed the coverage in Canada had been sparse and disappointing. There is no question that Canadian public aware-

ness of the significance of the Ministerial Mission was affected by the lack of properly co-ordinated press, publicity and information activities.

The most depressing lesson in this whole story is that the machinery for co-ordinating the Mission's public relations in Canada was so thoroughly ineffectual that even the declared concern of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for External Affairs could make it worse.

No News is Bad News

chapter begins with three brief case histories of news by Government departments to publicize fully what they were doing. The cases are fairly interesting in themselves but they also lead to some conclusions, and discussion of both "the federal presence," and the increasingly crucial business of the public's "right now." First, the three cases:

Major users of DBS statistics across the country interviewed, and most complained about the lack timeliness of DBS figures. Some of the complaints were serious. None of these people appeared even to be aware that for more than a year a committee of senior officials had been working to improve the timeliness of several monthly series of statistics, and they'd achieved measurable success. DBS had failed to communicate to any of the people who use its information that they were now getting a better service than they used to get. That, the way things were going, the service would be better still. A report on information functions at CMCS commented on the "curious reluctance" of DBS to do a modest, but legitimate and useful, blowing of its horn:

A senior official observed that DBS had considered doing a publicity job' on the drive for timeliness but decided against it for fear that public reaction might be, "What time?" or "Why don't they speed up everything while they're at it?" Effective communication cannot be expected to flourish in such a defensive and naive sphere."

Earlier in this report we mentioned the mishandled pamphlets of the Department of Manpower and Immigration sent to the hands of the unemployed, and others who might want such information. What we did not mention then was that this failure was not exactly an accident but, at least partly, the result of deliberate policy. So far as presenting manpower information was concerned, the Department adopted almost an all or nothing approach. One initiated a "massive programme" of publicity, or virtually no programme at all. It was believed that a massive programme would inspire a stampede at the Canada Manpower Centres. In October 1968, a report said:

During the period of rebuilding, the Department has decided any sort of aggressive information programme, it was felt, might bring more clients to our door which we could handle and which would, as a result, give us a bad name with the public. As late as this spring, departmental officers were still expressing grave doubts

that CMCS could handle the increased traffic that would be encouraged by a positive public information program."

No one, apparently, has ever tried seriously and systematically to test the assumption that, across the land, armies of men and women might have deluged the Manpower Centres. There was, it's true, a pilot advertising programme in the Prairies but it indicated that such an event was most unlikely. The idea of the pilot ad programme was "... to advise the public in a specific area about Canada Manpower Centre services in general and training in particular." It was informative rather than promotional but, even allowing for the fact that it "was not designed to drive great numbers of people into CMC offices," the results were a fairly strong indication that there was no avalanche of unemployed about to plunge down upon the Manpower offices. "Winnipeg produced 169 employee-clients contacting the office and 22 employers. Calgary reported 131 clients and Regina 64. This is not really a massive response . . ." In addition, some regions had small advertising programmes.

"What concerns me," wrote the chairman of the Task Force team that evaluated the Manpower information efforts, "is that this assumption (of the potential avalanche) – which was accepted throughout the Department – probably discouraged experimentation . . . Thus, the opportunity was lost to experiment in selected areas with a variety of advertising and publicity media to see which would be the best means of bringing employer-clients and employee-clients into CMCS."

A survey of men and women in low-income urban areas reported that a fifth of the people interviewed who had drawn unemployment insurance did not know even the general location of the nearest CMC, and that the unemployed knew no more about Occupational Training for Adults than those with jobs. The unemployed, at the time, happened to be OTA's top priority but Manpower had failed to send its OTA pamphlets to Unemployment Insurance offices. (And they were tough enough to come by even in some CMCS; "... in most cases, the pamphlets were only available in the specific sections within the centre or in counsellors' desks.")

If a government starts a programme to provide adults with retraining, and then it deliberately underpublicizes the programme because it is afraid that a lot of adults might want retraining, could this not be a cause for cynicism about the sincerity of government intentions?

3. Last fall, a Canadian Press story reported that, under a federal-provincial programme in which the Fed-

eral Government pays two-thirds of the cost, 70,000 to 80,000 people would be moved out of remote communities in Newfoundland by 1980. The programme had started in 1965 and, since then, nearly 8,000 people had been moved.

The Task Force assumed at first that the story had originated in a routine press release from Fisheries, but this turned out to be wrong. The opening statement of the Minister of Fisheries to the Commons Committee on Fisheries and Forestry on October 29 had indeed included a brief description of the resettlement programme, and this speech had been distributed to the press. It was two days late in the English version, however, and three days late in the French version and, in any event, it had nothing at all to do with the *CP* story. The *CP* reporter had based his piece on replies given by the Minister on November 5 to questions put by some of the MPS on the Committee. The *CP* man happened to be the only reporter present. He said later that the resettlement programme was unfamiliar to him and, he thought, newsworthy. A senior officer in the Information Division at Fisheries, however, said they had issued no press release because the programme was not newsworthy; it had already been "largely publicized, to the point of saturation."

Later, however, this same information officer said that well, uh, actually, the Department itself had not given any publicity to the resettlement programme, not since its birth, and that was back in 1965. There had been ". . . a Ministerial decision that it should not be over-publicized for several reasons."

One reason was that a provincial government was administering the programme. Another was that resettlement was purely voluntary, and therefore "It was strongly emphasized that no pressures be exerted on the people, and too much publicity might be a form of coercion." One wonders if there are not some practical areas of information dispersal between "too much publicity" and no publicity at all but, more important than that, there's the big question of what information a government department should feel blandly free not to release to the public.

The resettlement programme is expensive. It moved 7,695 people in the three years following March 1965, and the cost to the Federal Government was \$2,136,000. By 1980, when 50,000 to 60,000 more people are to have been moved (and not, incidentally, the 70,000 to 80,000 reported by *CP*), the Federal Government will

have paid a further \$13 million, and possibly more. The federal taxpayers of Canada are putting up two-thirds of the cost of the programme; and yet we have this three-and-a-half-year-old decision by a Federal Minister that the programme "should not be overpublicized"; and we also have this Federal information division still interpreting that decision to mean that it must not draw any public attention at all to the programme.

The timidity of the Fisheries Department, in the matter of volunteering publicity in connection with the Newfoundland resettlement programme, is part of a much larger reluctance by the federal administration as a whole to appear too offensively strong in the eyes of provincial governments. In practice, this reluctance amounts to an amorphous and unwritten policy, and its application in the field may vary from the genuinely and valuably diplomatic to the simply chicken-hearted. The federal identity is further weakened by the fact that 90 per cent of all information service officers work in the Ottawa area; the information officers who do happen to be sent to regional offices are almost exclusively juniors; the more important information decisions at the local levels must still be referred to Ottawa; the people in Ottawa may not know enough about the local scene to make intelligent decisions; the regional offices are weak, underpaid, understaffed and since they inevitably reflect conditions back in the Mother Country at Ottawa, they are also utterly unco-ordinated with one another.

All together, by mail or in person, the Task Force interviewed several hundred knowledgeable Canadians in parts of the country and, among all the dozens upon dozens of suggestions and recommendations that came from these people, the one that came closest to being unanimous may be summarized as, "Set up better, stronger, and smarter, and faster working regional offices. Fit federal information to local needs. Do something about the federal presence at the local level." In discussions about participatory democracy, getting the federal word to the special publics, feedback on the people's action to federal initiatives, and the whole subject of the flow of information both ways between government and people, the hard and clear advice almost invariably came back to the importance of asserting the federal presence and improving the quality and relevance of federal information, not for the "great Canadian public" but for each man's backyard. This appeared to be particularly urgent in connection with what might be called "serial information" — such as where to go to get your

chlet, or your pension — but there was a broaderency, as well. Good regional offices of the federal information services would strengthen the federal image inada and if there are areas in which it's legitimate to about "the image", we would argue that one of these is the democratic and Federal Government ofada. Moreover, if telling it "like it is" implies an obligation to reveal one's errors and failures and fatalities and edingly painful problems, there is no reason why itld not also imply the revelation of one's good works.ould be an automatic responsibility of the Information in Fisheries to tell us what our money is doing infoundland, and this should be clear to the Govern-ent of Newfoundland.

Task Force investigation of federal informationts in Winnipeg reported that ". . . even withoutnting the military component or Crown Corporations, Federal Government presence is roughly equal to there bureaucracy of the Province of Manitoba." Most-informed Winnipegers had no idea of the size of theederal Government establishment in their city. And yet, the author of the Winnipeg study insisted, ". . . theinued existence of an organization may depend uponavourable, or at least accurate, public awarenesshat organization . . . If the public is unaware of thent of the Federal Government's participation, and ifable credit and recognition is not secured, the publicight eventually assume that it could dispense with theeral form of government. The subject is no less im-ant than that. Several examples could be quoted. In Winnipeg region in 1968 the Red River Floodway was completed after several years of construction. It was a red-cost programme in which the Federal Governmentsumed 58 per cent of the financial burden. Yet theople of Manitoba popularly refer to this mammothconstruction project as 'Duff's Ditch'."

Again, with reference to the assertion of the fed-erence at the local level, a letter from a federal public-ant in Quebec City was singularly glum:
As a (temporary) Québécois, I permit myself to doubt anyone has ever satisfactorily informed the Federal public servants whom I see. It is not their fault if they not always identify with their work and their em-pliers. It is not their fault if they are of little use in-ebatting the general indifference or hostility towards work of the Federal administration in Quebec. . . . e Gare Maritime could, and should, be a showcase forada. It is the first point of land touched by hundreds

of thousands of newcomers to Canada. It is a huge block passed by millions of tourists each year, and seen daily by commuting Québécois. In architecture, it is Early Concentration Camp. Its ugly wire fences are bordered by wastelands full of uncut grass and straggling weeds. Its entrance is prison-like. Its interior is soulless, ugly, bespeaking an utter indifference towards the people who are herded here . . . When the Federal Government wants to tell what it is doing, it puts an excellent display about the Department of Transport in the Ottawa airport, or a lively exhibit of Central Mortgage and Housing on Confederation Square. In Quebec, we just disinfect the corridors. We believe in preaching to the converted . . . When we contribute to historic preservation in the city, we seem to go out of our way to disassociate ourselves from it. A recent, prominently displayed, letter to *Le Soleil* said the Government of Canada had never given a cent to the historic region of Quebec. Who bothered to answer it? The Federal Government has done more than anyone to save the physical aspects of French-Canadian history. Why are such agencies as the Historic Sites Division sworn to silence? Why can't we Québécois see more of what our taxes are paying for."

But let us retreat from the disinfected corridors in the federal buildings at Quebec City, and from Duff's Ditch as well. We'll return to the three case histories. The Department of Fisheries decided not to publicize fully a particular federal effort in Newfoundland. The Department of Manpower and Immigration decided not to publicize fully some of the opportunities available to the people through its own Manpower Centres. And the Dominion Bureau of Statistics decided it would be just as well not to publicize the fact that it had succeeded in speeding up some of its notoriously slow services. The motives for these highly negative decisions were different in each situation. In none of these cases, had anyone gone far out of his way to ask for public information, and then been refused it and therefore there was no defiant suppression of information that anyone was burning to know. The trouble is, you have to know something before you've any idea of the further things that you want to know; and the common significance of these three cases is merely that they were all departmental decisions to avoid letting anyone know much about anything.

They were the decisions of public servants whose long habits of thinking about public information are perhaps deeply coloured by an atmosphere of reticence, a distrust of openness, and a constitutional tradition that can in-

variably be counted on to afford precedent and justification for the official closed mouth. We have inherited from Britain the principles of Ministerial responsibility, the dominant executive, and both the neutrality and anonymity of the public service. We've also inherited from Britain the idea of the "thirty-year rule" whereby governments are bound to preserve some papers in secrecy for a generation, and the tradition of tight administrative secrecy has come to us from both England and France. Moreover, the members of our Privy Council take an oath that they will "... keep close and secret all such matters as shall be treated, debated and resolved on in Privy Council."

These words, with their solemn and ancient ring, commit the heads of our Government to silence – even in cases where the secrecy may be neither useful, nor valuable, nor essential, nor beneficial to the country – and perhaps it is now time for a second and counterbalancing commitment. A commitment not to all the things about which the members of the Privy Council may not open their mouths in public, but to some fresh guidelines about the sort of things that they should talk about in public.

The rites and inheritances of government reticence undoubtedly come to us for good and proven reasons, but it is possible for them to get out of hand. One of the older but increasingly more frequent sources of banter in Ottawa is the extraordinary (and extraordinarily expensive) volume of memos that are locked away, and working papers and background notes and idle doodlings that mysterious functionaries continue to rubber stamp as secret, or strictly secret, or confidential, or restricted, or classified, or for the Minister's eyes only.

In any event, it may be that the pressures of society and the democratic need to involve unprecedented numbers of the public in the decisions of government have already destroyed some of the value of the tradition and that, in new and freshly urgent times, it has become archaic and cumbersome and infectious. There is a suspicion among a great many politicians and journalists that the tradition is irresistible to government officials who are more interested in avoiding trouble than they are in giving the people information that is rightfully theirs. The tradition may be wielded to suppress a massive volume of information that, in other countries, might automatically be public.

A member of one public seminar on government information said, "Pertinent information about Government agencies and programmes is so restricted that the

average citizen gets culturally deprived, and thus tends to be apathetic, and does not fully participate in the democratic process." The Canadian Association for Adult Education suggests, "There is a need for a basic change of attitude on the part of the Government and the administration . . . At present, there is a tendency to treat information restrictively unless cause is shown . . . demonstrated as to why it should not be so restricted. We believe the reverse should be the case. Information should be actively disseminated and made available unless cause can be shown as to why it should not be . . . Any risk should be on the side of greater freedom of access . . ."

And a newspaperman, who seemed to be reflecting the opinion of many of his colleagues in Ottawa, said that "There is an absence of conviction at the top levels of Government that the public should be as fully informed as possible on its policies, problems and workings. Unless it is the known purpose of Ministers and Deputy Ministers that all possible information will be made available to the press and to the public, there will be an actual tendency on the part of middle rank and junior officials to hold back any information that has not been expressly released by higher authority."

Even the members of so supreme a body as the Commons itself frequently suffer bitterly annoying rebuffs in their encounters with bureaucratic walls of secrecy. One study reports that, "Varying their comments in the light of their own frustrations, they (the MPs with whom we spoke) reiterated again and again their inability to secure access to departmental information which the departmental administration held to be either of a confidential, secret, classified or otherwise privileged nature; the unavailability of departmental research materials, 'working documents', or 'supporting papers' bearing on policy formulation; the confidentiality of unpublished 'research studies' done within the government service and the denial to the public of the results of such research financed by the taxpayer . . ."

Some members asserted that public servants were the last people who should be allowed to define the government's "right to withhold information" and one Privy Councillor believed there was no need at all to restrain " . . . at least 90 per cent of government papers and documents." (The government this year has already heard from the Royal Commission on Security, and one of its duties was to consider government information from the point of view of security i.e., of what should be kept

et. One of our studies examines the problem of access to Canada from an informational standpoint and concludes the government might usefully provide guidelines for governments and agencies whereby there might be fewer "secrets" and greater freedom of access.) These MPs believed that there was now only one way left to disperse the whole fog of secrecy and excessive discretion and theous-Nellyism that surrounds so much printed government information; and that was for a Cabinet to pronounce an appropriate and freshly open policy on government information and a declared entrenchment of the people's "right to know."

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The whole matter of government information services, and the function of information in a parliamentary democracy is large enough to absorb entire discussions of political science and philosophy and, as someone put it at a recent seminar sponsored by the Canadian Association for Adult Education, "It may be that we should be talking about totally different concepts of government other than information services." As it happens, the Task Force can't quite buy that. We're inclined to think that what we should be talking about, rather than new concepts of government, is the adaptation of old concepts of government, old democratic concepts of government, to new and increasingly fantastic social circumstances. Surely, the ability to change to meet the social demands of the times should be a hallmark of modern democracy. But where we go. Already, we're moving into the fat background of relevant theory and, we've still not outlined any specific flaws within the splendidly assorted information services of the federal government.

We have, however, defined the main strains in the mess of the information services, and considered the old influences that have caused the mess. The evidence behind these definitions is voluminous. The many studies undertaken on behalf of the Task Force in recent months exist in quantities that bespeak an extraordinary amount of conscientiousness on the part of a great many people who became interested in our objectives. No literate person — less, possibly, it's the mother of a government ISO could study the bulk of this research without agreeing that the information services of the government of Canada, as a whole, a functional mess (and, probably, a lot of those mothers would agree with us, too). The mess is extraordinary enough to require rapid and drastic correction and, therefore, we have intended this volume to be the final answer on every last thing that's wrong with information services but, rather, an invitation to reform. The broad details of the invitation are among the recommendations.

It may be argued, "So, okay, the government information services are a mess. So are a lot of things. Anyway, better to have a whole bunch of innocent bunglers government information than one super-efficient propaganda machine, and what's the rush anyway?" The reasons for the rush, and the question of propaganda as well, take us unavoidably back to those open fields of theory; and back, too, to Chapter I for final romp among the large crises that lurk, and periodically burst forth, among all the western demo-

cracies. The idea suggested in Chapter I, and it was scarcely original to us, was that unless governments can contain the spread of apathy, alienation and disaffection among their peoples then democratic systems must inevitably succumb to the gradual rotting of their vitality, to accelerating public violence, or to the consolidation of governmental power in a degree of dictatorship. The three developments are far from mutually exclusive.

We are not arguing that a reform of the Governments' information services is all that's required to keep the world safe for democracy. After all, what governments do, as well as what they say, has something to do with the health of the democratic system. We are arguing, however, that one way to fight the decline of democratic health is to guarantee that the flow of information from the government to the people, from the people back to the government, and endlessly back and forth and back again, is large, fast, trustworthy, correct, credible, open and relevant. The information that the government gives to the people must be relevant to what the people require in order to be bright and critical and constructive in affairs of state; the information that the people give to the government must be relevant to what the government requires in order to do what the people want done.

No one who gives any thought to the way democracies work can seriously question such hoary ideas. The arguments arise over how much information the people should have; over who should funnel it to them; over the dignity of Parliament and its duty to inform the people; over Cabinet solidarity; the status of the MP; official secrecy; and the proper rôles for the press, television, radio, backroom boys, political parties, government flacks, lobbyists, interested groups of citizens, Cabinet Ministers and the executive assistants to Cabinet Ministers; and on, and on, and so on. As we've suggested, when you talk about information and government, you're talking about government.

It is inevitable, we know, that any talk of radical changes to improve the efficiency of the government information services, and to impose on them something that actually smacks of co-ordination, will inspire great, whooping cries of "propaganda machine... brain-washers... thought control." Some of this sort of screaming is bound to occur whenever governments innovate. The CBC was not a universally popular idea in the Thirties. Nevertheless, the cries are a product of a permanent and healthy suspicion of the motives of Big Government, and we want to be the first to acknowledge

that, throughout this and perhaps any other discussion of government information services, a crucial distinction should be kept in mind. At the public service level, it is the difference between useful, objective information and pure propaganda on behalf of a department. At the top, in the Cabinet, it is the difference between useful, objective information and propaganda on behalf of the party in power. We know about it. Our intention is that the entire machinery of government information operate out in the open. Our recommendations reflect this intention.

In any event, it is possible that the risk involved in continuing to do nothing is far greater than the risk involved in bringing order and inspiration to the information services. The times are changing with such extraordinary rapidity that the debates over even such important matters as television coverage of the Commons have begun to sound stale. Like stories about Sir John A's drinking habits they are almost too familiar. And the reason for this air of mustiness is that while the old talk goes on a great bombardment of ominous, thrilling and sensational events keep occurring in other places, and incomprehensible trends are under way, and the news of these things comes to us faster and more frequently than ever before. Universities lie in shambles. Strikes break out up and down the land. There's war on this border, bloody revolution in that ghetto, assassination in the eyes of one madman or another. Events leap to serve the great snouts of the TV news cameras. We *watch* the history on the streets of Paris; we *watch* the night-sticks fly on the streets of Chicago; we *watch* the men on the moon. The satellite stations spin around the world; and the world itself spins towards God knows what. And, all the time, we argue and we speculate. Should we, or should we not, allow television into the Commons Chamber?

It is not as though these new tensions in society have replaced the old ones. For the old ones are still with us and, perhaps, growing more severe. The poor still resent the rich. There are still the uneducated and the educated, the outsiders and the establishment insiders, our national interests frequently set against our international obligations, the provinces against Ottawa, the municipalities against the provinces, the young against the old, the country mouse and the city mouse, and times are contentious all over. One can't help wondering, Are the technical miracles of the age of communications really drawing us all together in the famous 'global village' or are they driving us apart, and breaking us all up? And, can any

democratic system of government – particularly one that forever saddled with the congenital problems of Canadian federalism – can any such arrangement possibly survive long if the world has become so noisy and its affairs so complex that the government can no longer hear the people? And the people no longer care to hear the government?

The words "participatory democracy" have become tiresomely familiar that one scarcely regards them more as separate words. If one does look at them, however, they appear at first almost as a redundancy. Has participation always been the very essence of democracy? The answer to that is, well, yes, in a way, but for the great bulk of the population that's true only if one regard voting once every few years as participation in a more strict sense, the essence of democracy has really been participation at all, but representation. Representation and participation do not deny one another, but total participatory democracy is an impossibility because everyone participated in government all the time there would be no government. (No food either).

The definition of "participatory democracy" varies with whatever political scientist you happen to be reading, or politician you happen to be hearing. (And, let me hasten to acknowledge, there is much to be said for the idea that it is one's democratic right just to sit around and enjoy oneself, to refuse to participate). Let me simply say that participatory democracy is an ideal that, in practice, would involve the participation in the actual making of government decisions of a great many more people than ever before. The participation could express itself in advisory councils of citizens; consultation by television; do-it-yourself film documentaries of social conditions that cry out for government attention; exploitation of highly accessible local clearing-houses of government information; the heightened use of such conventional instruments and channels of fact and opinion as the newspapers; and, always, the Member of Parliament. The important thing is that the Government gets the people's informed opinions not after it lays down policy, but before, and that the participation of people in the decisions that the government makes be a sham. Obviously, the integrity and relevance of the information that flows both ways between the government and the people is crucial to the whole relationship.

We do not claim that this relationship is exactly the relationship between a lecturer and his students. There are parallels, and we would like to end our effor-

the moment, with some words from George Wald, Harvard biology professor and Nobel prize winner. Recently, Wald said:

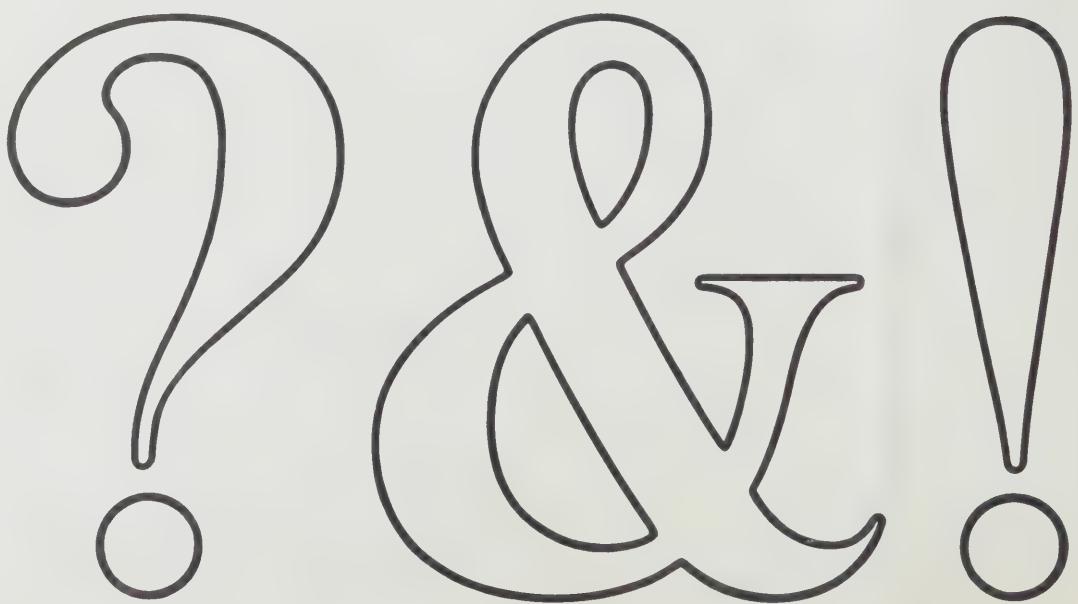
"For these past few years, I have felt increasingly that something is terribly wrong — and this year ever so much more than last. Something has gone sour, in teaching and in learning. It's almost as though there were a wide-spread feeling that education has become irrelevant. A lecture is much more of a dialogue than many of you probably realize. As you lecture, you keep watching the students, and information keeps coming back to you all the time. I began to feel, particularly this year, that I was missing much of what was coming back. I tried asking the students, but they didn't or couldn't help me very much."

Something of what Wald expressed has also happened in the relationship between the peoples of many western democracies and their governments; and, at the price of resorting to verbal gimmickry, we suggest that, if one were to imagine Wald as a government, his words might fully be read as follows:

"For these past few years, I have felt increasingly that something is terribly wrong — and this year ever so much more than last. Something has gone sour in the political system. It's almost as though there were a wide-spread feeling that government has become irrelevant. Government is much more of a dialogue than you probably realize. As you govern, you keep hearing the people, and information keeps coming back to you all the time. I began to feel, particularly this year, that I was missing much of what was coming back. I tried to ask the people, but they didn't or couldn't help me very much."

And that, too, is what the following proposals are all about. Watching the faces, and hearing the people.

To Know
and Be Known



Problem: A Summary

have not been gentle. There was method in our nastiness but, nevertheless, it is possible that we've brought an unbecoming sort of zest to our criticism of the government information services. In any event, as more and more people are telling the student rebels, it is indeed easier, (and more entertaining) to tear something down than it is to propose the institutions that will guarantee a better day coming. In this part of Volume I, we therefore hope to balance the nastiness with some thinking about the future of government information, and some recommendations for its improvement. Still, we cannot put our recommendations into current perspective or make why they matter without a brisk summary of the broad flaws in federal government information as a whole.

The last negative opinion in Volume I. We'll make it

We found some good features in the information services but the great weight of our evidence was unhappy. The federal government has no general information policy. There is no agency to help it either develop or implement such a policy. There are simply no broad guidelines enabling such central authorities as the Privy Council Office, Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission to give general focus to the assorted information units of the government. What governs federal information activities are the separate priorities and separate preparations of separate departments and separate agencies. This work is often fragmented. It is generally unco-ordinated. It lacks clarity of purpose. Sometimes, in terms of the broader issues and goals of government, it is contradictory.

The ultimate blame for this situation should not rest with the information service officers, nor the information ministers, nor the Deputy Ministers, nor with such abstractions as the pride and independence of the departments of government. The root of the trouble is just "the system," the only people who were ever in a position to set a policy for the system of government information were those in the room at the top – Prime Ministers and their cabinets. For generations before the second World War, they did not; and perhaps, in those days, this failure was neither extraordinary nor crucial. But the war has been over now for almost a quarter of a century. The country, information and its technology, and the people's information requirements have changed and grown beyond anyone's ability to predict and yet, though Prime Ministers

have succeeded Prime Ministers and Cabinets have come and gone, the federal government still has no information policy.

If vacuums can breed, the government's policy vacuum on public information has bred some massive failings. It has meant that the Federal Government has simply had no ready means to address itself to all crucial questions of information policy that transcend the programme interests of the departments and agencies. One might ask, "Well what are these questions that are so big no one department can take them on?" They concern the participation of the people in the processes of government. They concern public access to government information. They concern the fostering of a sense of national identity and the production of documentation of national interest. They concern the setting of new standards of competence in the use of the official languages; the need to improve the quality of Canadian information abroad; the need to inform the Canadian people of the cultural activities of their government; the attitude of public servants towards informing the public; the current failure of government information to penetrate the regions and the special publics of the country; and the possibility, no matter how difficult, of improving co-operation in the field of information between the federal government and the provinces. There are other such questions but, for the moment, we'll rest with these.

The heart of the problem is that, although they transcend the responsibilities of the departmental information divisions, the government has not provided any larger framework for their resolution. No government, for example, has ever systematically assigned responsibilities to fulfil the special information needs of the poor. No government has ever systematically sought to provide information and advice on a local basis to its citizens. No government has ever given to the information services any policies or guidelines on the need to define the publics of federal information; or policies on such relatively technical matters as the enlightened exploitation of research, advertising and the new technology. Canadian governments, over the years since the second World War, have unquestionably spent hundreds of millions of dollars on information but not one of these governments has ever set a policy to provide any consistent testing of the results of this investment. There is no policy on cost-benefit studies. Indeed, throughout the information services, there has never been a general policy to regulate the use of such basic equipment of communication as radio and television.

In the information services themselves, there are serious

problems of morale and effectiveness, and these too ultimately stem from the absence of policy objectives. Information personnel are often left more or less to their own endeavours. For information staff, training is often inadequate; specialized skills and modern technology are often severely limited; career opportunities are often bleak. They have neither challenging prospects for contributing to the country as professionals, nor great hope for their own advancement in the public service. With few exceptions, the information services linger on the fringes of departmental operations and, consequently, they are often poorly informed about the policies and implications of the programmes in their own departments. It is all very well for the public, and Cabinet Ministers, and others (including ourselves) to criticize the departmental information services, but it is only fair to remark that these services operate without guidelines and in considerable isolation. It is understandable that they often find it difficult to achieve results that gratify everyone.

There is, as well, the broad problem of interdepartmental confusion in information activities, and duplication of effort. At the moment, there is simply no machinery to guarantee the kind of co-ordination that would enable the information services of the different departments to perform together to achieve more than the occasional united presentation. Moreover, since the government has not yet even defined what it means by government information and each department is free to make its own definition for accounting purposes, there is a special government-wide confusion over the cost of information. If the government cannot decide what government information is, even for accounting purposes, it is difficult to begin to measure accurately the dollar value of its information programmes, let alone their more general value.

The absence of government policy on information has had some other important and unfortunate consequences. One is that Cabinet Ministers and their political assistants have often been content with the way things are because it has enabled them to exploit the distribution of what should be objective government information for partisan or personal purposes. For some politicians in power, their failure to set an information policy has not been a bad thing at all. At the same time, however, other Ministers and their political staffs have accepted the considerable burden of distributing straight government information only reluctantly and, as a rule, the practice fails to satisfy the public servants, the public or indeed, the politicians.

In short, despite the Federal Government's annual expenditure of large sums of money on information, it has largely failed to exercise its potential role in informing the publics, and in hearing what they have to say. The failure applies both in Ottawa and in the various regions of the country, and it has been particularly noticeable before the recent and vigorous information activities of several provincial governments. They have surpassed Ottawa both in the amount of attention they have given to the organization of information programmes and, not surprisingly, in the results they have achieved in some fields. In some regions of Canada, even foreign governments are promoting their views, while no comparable effort flows from the information services of the Federal Government. The Federal Government is the one level of government in Canada that is obliged to serve the entire national interest; and the failure of successive federal administrations to establish a policy in the information field amounts to a failure to fulfil a major responsibility to the federation.

But perhaps we have already overindulged a taste for lamentation and, in Volume I anyway, it is time to start making the case for change and start proposing a philosophy that should direct it, and the machinery that might bring it about. In the pages that follow, we propose some principles of a government information policy and some specific structures to give it flesh and action. In arriving at these recommendations, we have kept in mind both departmental and national requirements. We were aware, too, that a national policy on public information must recognize both the federal nature of our constitution, and the delicate balances that are essential to parliamentary democracy in Canada. The recommendations (and indeed, the very appointment of the Task Force) reflect a concern for a new level of efficiency in government information. We do not seek this efficiency for the sweet sake of efficiency alone. Democratic governments are not razor-blade factories or space ships, and their very health and vibrancy may partly depend on their tolerance of a certain amount of human inefficiency. Our point is only that there's a limit to the inefficiency they may safely endure and that, in the case of the government information services, the limit may already be far astern.

Principles of an Information Policy

Most people abhor any policy that bears a resemblance

state propaganda. The political parties, journalists and other leaders of opinion who fear the potential harm of government propaganda are quick to encourage public awareness of the subtle signs of state brainwashing. Information, however, also has its respectable uses, and the fact that many people have failed to notice is that the social, political, economic and technological changes of time have dramatically increased the importance of these fields of information. One of these fields is government information. Information is now essential to growth in most areas of human endeavour, and governments face a new dilemma. A government can pretend that nothing has happened, or that the changes are not significant. It can go the old route, and thereby avoid any serious charges of harbouring improper intentions of establishing a propaganda machine. Or it can take the needs of the time into account, reform its information efforts, and bring to bear on its fresh information the force of appropriate democratic safeguards. Now, it should be clear which course this Task Force favours.

The choice, however, has led us to a conclusion, and this conclusion is central to some of our later proposals for specific structures to develop information policy. The conclusion is that, *since any strengthening of the government's information apparatus involves the possibility of a government's manipulating public opinion, there must be parallel strengthening of both Parliament and the public in the determination and review of government information policies.*

There were two other conclusions or, rather, principles that were basic to our thinking, and we suggest these as the very cornerstone of a new policy on information. They are that, *the Government has an obligation to provide full, objective and timely information; that the citizens have a right to such information.* Since these principles involve a right of the people and duty of government, there is reason to declare them publicly and to protect them in some permanent and final way.

They immediately raise a number of considerations about the current situation with regard to public access to government information. The assumption behind most government activity is that, until an official designates information as generally available, it must remain classified. The people, and particularly the press, must sometimes make extraordinary efforts to get government information and, when they do get it, it may arrive

through obscure processes of pre-selection. The atmosphere these difficulties create damages the very credibility of the information. Moreover, the information may be incomplete, or too late to inspire constructive response, too late to give the people any sense of their own involvement in the processes of government. Obviously the government must observe essential safeguards with regard to specified kinds of information — a Royal Commission on Security reported on this recently — but it has a general obligation to release information and documents to journalists, academics, and others who know how to ask for them. We would go further. We suggest the government also has an obligation to make sure useful information gets out to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who never think of asking for it, and perhaps do not know where to go to get it on their own. The government, in our view, must not only release information; it must sow it as well.

But in each case, exactly who should do the sowing? The Prime Minister and his Office? The Cabinet Minister and his personal staff? Or the Information Director, through his staff? The answer may never be simple or absolute but perhaps it need not be quite so confusing and cumbersome as it is today. We've already frowned in passing at the attitude of Cabinet Ministers and their staffs who pay little heed to their information services, and we've suggested that other Ministers and their executive assistants are themselves not entirely happy with the burden of information-dispersal they've accepted. We did not, of course, mean to suggest that Cabinet Ministers and their political assistants should never pass out any information about government activities. On the contrary, the informative responsibility of Ministers and especially of their political party is crucial to the whole process of government, and it is essential to Canada's particular form of democratic life that Cabinet Ministers on occasion be openly and actively partisan. They can hardly be expected to defend their administration without using information. And we can hardly have an effective party system if all political parties are not actively engaged in producing politicized information on government policies. There cannot be a sense of dialogue between government and the people unless the highest representatives of the government offer frank and topical information about what they're doing on the people's behalf, and if this is not done well at the top, public servants will be helpless to rectify the situation.

Cabinet Ministers need a good deal of time to devote to these democratic or, if you prefer, these partisan activities. So do political parties. And the trouble with the current confusion over the difference between official information and partisan information is not only that it can lead to public servants being improperly treated as party servants but also that it frequently leaves the Ministers and their political assistants with insufficient time to pursue their government's legitimate partisan concerns.

The distinction between partisan information and "pure" official government information may be forever gray, but it does not have to be quite so mixed up and muddy as it is now. The more that information officers are brought into the ministerial deliberations, the more inclined they will be to seize information opportunities on their own. The greater access a senior information officer has to his Minister, the more effective he will be in performing his tasks and the freer the Minister will be to indulge in his own information activities. (In saying this, however, we recognize that the effectiveness of these decisions about departmental information depend to a great degree on as basic a matter as how well the information officer, who must report to his Deputy, happens to get along with his Minister. The quality of personal relationships cannot be structured in advance.)

The government's obligation to release information might extend, in the first instance, to its deliberations over a new policy on information. There could hardly be a more inescapably logical place for an open attitude toward information. The information policy must be open to public scrutiny. It must endure the airing of grievances, and suffer the open review of its standards of operation. Its definition should be reached publicly, through submission to Parliament and the people. Its scrutiny by a committee of Parliament would be a natural event in the current Parliamentary trend to increased responsibility at the committee level for the study of government policies.

There are a number of other areas of consideration that our studies suggest should be basic to the formulation of a federal government policy on information. (We regret the tone of preachifying that sometimes characterizes this discussion but, in proposing things that ought to be considered and ought to be done, we saw no way to avoid it.)

First of all, there are those hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are not getting enough information to enable them to participate in the decisions of their

government. Their geographic location, their poor education, their language deficiencies, and any number of other problems prevent them from gaining even the government information that, in theory anyway, is currently available to them. They are the handicapped. They are handicapped or unreached in the sense that they neither know enough, nor are in a position to care enough to participate in the affairs of government; or even help themselves to the services that the government has designed for their benefit. A government policy on information should define how government information can meet the needs of these people. The government, exploring ways to get information to them, might well consult with provincial and municipal administrations. It is also possible that where government agencies have failed, some other institutions, newer to many Canadian regions might succeed. These men and women might, for instance, be responsive to such special facilities as Citizens' Advisory Bureaux, administered by private agencies or volunteer organizations, and staffed and supported by competent professional people.

The discussion of any federal information policy must also include ways to improve the communications between the federal government and the provinces. Such familiar methods of information transmittal as the periodic federal-provincial conferences of politicians and officials matter how regular they may become are no substitute for such improvement: what the federation needs is new machinery of communication between the two levels of government. Governments at all levels develop their information programmes in an atmosphere that is distinctly competitive and, therefore, a proposal for co-operative machinery may appear naive. We argue, nonetheless, that the interests of the public and the long-run interest of the federation both require that the exchange of information between Ottawa and the provinces be put on a regular basis. The new machinery should smooth and speed the movement of government information among Ottawa, the provinces, and the regions. It should be a tool of intergovernmental co-operation in getting information to the people, and it should enrich government information programmes abroad.

Federal-provincial relations inevitably bring up the vital matter of the so-called "federal presence" in Canada. It is virtually axiomatic that since the federal government is the one government of the entire country, its information policy must carry its messages clearly to every region of Canada. Every village, or street, or fa-

relevant government information does not reach is addition to the sum of the policy's failure. And right, the government's apparatus for the regional distribution of information, and for the regional *reception* of information, is not adequate. A chief priority of a government information policy must be the "federal presence" in all the regions, and the establishment of regional offices increase and co-ordinate the outpouring of information from federal programmes. The outpouring should be not to the people, but from them as well. The traditional natural channel for the people's feedback to the government has always been the Member of Parliament, now it is no longer certain that any already hardened Member can handle it all, and Members might appreciate the supplementary assistance the regional offices could provide. The Report of the Science Council Scientific and Technical Information emphasizes the social importance of improved systems for transferring information in Ottawa and the regions.

Another pillar of government information policy might be a definition of the function of information in the pursuit of the government's social and economic and cultural goals. Information is ubiquitous in the affairs of government. It has a vital and instrumental role in the government's efforts to achieve virtually all of its most important general objectives. It is vital not only to the collective focus of programmes at the departmental level, also to that bigger business of coping with national problems that are beyond the scope of any one department. In the course of the Task Force's research, it had increasingly unfortunate and extraordinary that Canadian government had ever got around to spelling out the relationship between government information and government objectives.

The functions of information are one thing, however; techniques of collecting and distributing it — the rational systems — are another. In our opinion, they are hardly less important to a discussion of information policy. The government should assign research, and mobilize experts from both inside and outside government, to investigate aspects of modern social communication, and, in particular, the reciprocal flow of information between the people and government. The government might establish administrative machinery for the integrated use of audio-visual techniques, print, advertising, media relations, computers and any other instruments and institutions that would enable it to bring its information to Canadians more effectively than it does now.

To get information from Canadians more effectively than it does now, the government should consider using social surveys much more extensively than it has in the past. The government requires systematic and co-ordinated research to assess the public impact and public value of its programmes and policies. Canada lags behind other countries in governmental use of both media research and social surveys, and those surveys that it does undertake are unco-ordinated and therefore sometimes wasteful. The government's relative neglect of survey research has impaired understanding of Canadian society and its information needs. An information policy should recognize that the results of government social surveys should be made public.

The government also has a rôle to play in the transmission of technical and scientific information, — recently, it received a substantial report on this topic from the Science Council of Canada — and it should reconcile its activities in this field, too, with the broader considerations of a government policy on information.

The discussion of new administrative structures, government-wide co-ordination of some information effort, and the strengthening of the "federal presence" may suggest to some that the Task Force favours the sapping or emasculation of departmental responsibility in public information. We do not. No discussion of a broad government policy on information should be allowed to obscure the principle of primary departmental responsibility for departmental information effort. Again, the departments and agencies of the Federal Government must retain their responsibility for both the policy and content of information services that relate directly to their own departmental or agency objectives. Indeed, within the framework of a general government policy on information, the effectiveness of departmental information services should become not weaker than it is now, but stronger. They should be able to draw on the skills, expertise, communications hardware and technical advice of the system we propose. Moreover, a rationalization of government information services should bring about a wide range of training for information staff, new possibilities for promotion, and unprecedented mobility within the public service. The upshot, we suggest, would be an improvement in both the morale and effectiveness of departmental information staff.

There are two more fairly specific concerns that should be basic to the development of a useful information policy, and one of them is the critical need for the government to

define both its objectives and its methods in the promotion of Canadian information abroad. The quality of information programmes abroad depends on the efficiency of the systems at home. An improvement in Ottawa can inspire improvements in London, Paris and Washington but, at the moment two of the chief flaws in the government's domestic information also apply, in spades, to its policies and programmes for overseas information. These are a lack of coherence, and a failure of co-ordination. The relevant departments and agencies (and there are a great many of them) must continue to exercise their responsibilities for the overseas information programmes that are primarily their own business but, at the same time, a new government policy on information abroad should give their efforts general direction, support and co-ordination to achieve the consistency, purpose and focus that they have so clearly lacked in the past.

Finally, we suggest the government should declare information policies that concern the two official languages, and the other languages of the country. In relating information to national goals, nothing could be more significant than a policy on languages in the information field. The government, in all its information efforts, should recognize the proper and creative use of the two official languages – and whatever other languages that specific publics may speak – as a matter of prime importance.

To summarize once more, we propose that the following considerations serve as the basis for the development of the Canadian Government's first general policy on government information: a declared recognition of the government's duty to inform, and the people's right to information; the potential rôle of public information in the interests of Canadians who now get so little of it that they are incapable of participating in government affairs; federal-provincial relations in information matters; the assertion of "the federal presence" and the establishment of regional information offices; the function of information in relation to the government's social, economic, cultural and other goals; the operational systems behind a modern policy on information; the use of social surveys, and the principle that their results be made public; the government's rôle in the transmission of technical and scientific information; the continuation of departmental responsibility for departmental information programmes; information abroad; and the proper use of language in government information.

The chief concern of the rest of this chapter is the

challenge of turning these policy elements into action.

The Formulation of Information Policy

In our political system, the setting of policy is the responsibility of the executive; only the Cabinet may determine policies and select courses for their development. There are important implications in whatever developments may occur in the rationalization and co-ordination of the information programmes of the Federal Government and, in our opinion, the co-ordination function alone is onerous enough to justify the Cabinet assignment of a Minister specifically to undertake it. It would not be a "Minister of Information"; he would not be the "spokesman" for the government on information. What he would be is chairman of a Cabinet committee to deal with information policy and, in the first instance, this committee would concern itself with the objectives and organizational requirements of the new policy. The assignment of a Minister, as chairman of such a committee would give the Cabinet an overview of information policy – a scope of vision that's more comprehensive than anything the individual departments and agencies could possibly provide. It would help to maintain responsibility and sensitivity in an area of increasingly important national interest at the highest level of government.

One might reasonably ask, "But why just a Minister who's chairman of a committee on information policy? Why not a real Minister of Information? Wouldn't that be neater and more efficient?" The simple answer is that we find the idea of a Minister of Information as a "boss" of all government information to be unworkable in the Canadian context. Apparently, it is unworkable in the French context, as well; this summer, France abolished its 25-year-old ministry of information. The more complex answer stems from an administrative dilemma; we want co-ordination, yes, but at the same time we do not want excessive centralization. We want, if you can imagine it, the *de-centralized co-ordination of a major government activity* and, though many governments have wrestled with this very goal, it is doubtful whether any has ever quite achieved it. One sure way to deny co-ordination, however, is to appoint a central authority with power to impose the co-ordination.

There is another way to get at our reason for discarding the idea of a Minister of Information. Again, it is practical as much as theoretical considerations. The people who receive information should be fairly close

eople who distribute it; but the people who distribute must be very close to the people who create it or use it. The sources of information and the spreaders of information must know one another, and one another's. Therefore, each Minister is the "Minister of Information" for his own domain, and so he should be. Each Minister is deeply concerned with the communication of important news from his own department, or so he should be. Once this is recognized, the idea of an all-powerful Minister of Information for the Government of Canada is pointless; and the co-ordination of government information activity is inevitably a matter, not of fiat, of co-operation — of agreement among the assembled Ministers of Information." For these reasons, we suggest that the chairman of the Cabinet committee be one minister; that the Minister who is responsible for Information Canada (a central agency of information activity which we propose later in this chapter) be another; and neither in title nor in function, should there be a Minister of Information.

Again, there is a purpose in the apparent looseness of structure in this whole arrangement; the co-ordination requires co-operation, and co-operation is often a matter of personalities, and the way they rub one another. If the chairman of the Cabinet committee on information activity cannot get co-operation out of the committee, there will be only one result. There simply will not be any co-ordination of the information activities of the government. The committee would be advised and would receive support services in the normal way of other Cabinet committees. A secretariat of the Privy Council Office would serve it, and its sources of advice would not be one department but all departments, and the Prime Minister's Office. On relevant occasions it would seek the advice of central agencies as Treasury Board, the proposed Information Canada, or other specialists.

At the public service level, we suggest the establishment of a committee or, rather, a council: a council of Directors of Public Affairs Divisions (formerly Information Divisions) and, in some cases, other senior information officers, including those appointed to the Prime Minister's Office. Information Canada might service this council. The council would permit an understanding of government policies that affect all of the departmental services at once, or a group of them. It would pool knowledge of current information plans, and thereby give the services — including those required for information abroad — their first comprehensive view of their own working

context in almost 25 years. The full council might call a meeting only when circumstances appeared to warrant one, but its functional subcommittees would meet regularly.

There is another and critically important level at which, we suggest, government information should undergo scrutiny by committee. It is Parliament. Whether or not legislation relating to information is under consideration, there are sound reasons for sending the annual report of Information Canada to the Parliamentary Committee we mentioned earlier. The committee also would be a way to permit a continuing review of government policies in the information field, and there are a number of other justifications for the idea that a Parliamentary Committee concern itself with government information. Most of them derive from the whole sense of urgency that has inspired the Task Force to urge both a fresh official awareness of the national importance of public information and new structures to improve its flow.

One of the more obvious reasons why a Parliamentary Committee should regularly examine government information is the vast amount of public money that the information services absorb. Another is the great number and variety of government departments and agencies that perform information functions. Approval of some of the Task Force's recommendations would mean a reinforcement of all this information activity, and would call for balancing apparatus in the structure of our democratic machinery.

It is inevitable, as well, that certain legislation and proposals that are not directly related to information services will affect them nevertheless; and these too, might well come before a Parliamentary Committee that has specific duties in the field of government information policy. The Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts already reviews broadcasting policy and other matters over which the government has no direct control. The fact that the government does have control over its information services makes it all the more imperative that an appropriate organ of Parliament be charged with considering government information policies. It should be possible to frame committee terms of reference that are broad enough for a wide range of discussions on information policy but, at the same time, precise enough to ensure that it is not the same sort of discussion that is occurring in another committee. (It would be pointless, for instance, if a new Parliamentary Committee on Information Policy were to spend its time

as another parliamentary platform for opinions about CBC programming.)

We have suggested that a permanent council of top information staff should consider government information; that a committee of Parliament should review government information policy; and that a committee of Cabinet, chaired by a Minister, should concern itself with the formulation of such a policy. We suggest, as well, that another Cabinet Minister be responsible for, and report to Parliament on, the administration of Information Canada.

We regard the split in ministerial functions concerning information policy, and the Parliamentary Committee, as two safeguards against government's possible misuse of its strengthened machinery of information. Later in this chapter, we describe the rôle of public advocacy that Information Canada might perform in matters of government information. This, too should strengthen the public's hand; and, as we have already suggested, an examination of the government's system of classifying information, with a view towards expanding the public's access, might also be in the people's interest.

The foregoing considerations of principles, policy elements and the formulation of a general government policy on information – and the conclusions that appear in various parts of both Volume I and Volume II – have led us to recommend that:

1.

The right of Canadians to full, objective and timely information and the obligation of the State to provide such information about its programmes and policies be publicly declared and stand as the foundation for the development of new government policies in this field. This right and obligation might be comprehended within a new constitution in the context of freedom of expression.

2.

A committee of Ministers be charged with the task of developing effective information policies and facilitating a more coherent and economical approach by the Executive to the federal information function.

3.

The government move in due course to have the subject of information policy referred to a Committee of Parliament which, in addition, would receive for review the tabled annual report of Information Canada.

4.

To reinforce the advantages which a federal system can provide all sections of the community, federal-

provincial consultations be undertaken with a view to setting up permanent mechanisms to improve communications between levels of government in the field of information; to facilitate the transfer of governmental information from and to the various regions; to co-operate in the most appropriate way to ease the public's access to government information; and to make better use above all available information resources.

5.

Steps be taken to reach substantial sections of the Canadian public that are at present outside the main stream of the government information flow. That these steps include inviting the co-operation of provincial and municipal governments, private agencies and voluntary organizations in the establishment and financing of neighbourhood Citizens Advisory Bureaux and neighbourhood counsellors which would be administered by non-governmental agencies.

6.

In seeking ways to realize greater participation and understanding of the democracy and of government, systematic and co-ordinated attention be given to communications research and particularly to the establishment of a social survey unit (in association with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics) which would provide government, Parliament and the general public with a better appreciation than is now available to them of the needs of sections of the population and of the affects on Canadian existing federal legislation and regulations.

7.

Departments and agencies develop and implement information policies consistent with departmental agency objectives, and with the information policies of the Federal Government to reflect the enhanced rôle of the information function and of information officers; to strengthen their relations with the media and with particular publics nationally and regionally; and that departments and agencies be encouraged to increase the creative use of the two official languages.

8.

A Council of Directors of Public Affairs (formerly Information) Divisions from departments and agencies serviced by Information Canada, be set up to permit better understanding of government policies affecting or a particular group of them, to pool knowledge of current information plans thus developing a broader view of the context in which they operate.

time to time, in both volumes of this report, we come to what appears to be an inescapable need for some kind of central government agency of information resources and technical services. We suggest it be called Information Canada. It should be closely tied to the needs of the federal government and the departments and agencies at home and abroad, and it should perform in two general areas of information activity. The first involves a major information effort that is simply beyond the scope of any department's purposes or resources. The second concerns information activity that tends to be duplicated in expensive and inefficient systems. Information Canada would be called upon to correct these two general failings in a variety of ways. It would offer departments a range of support services; and it would do this either directly, or by hiring or contract the appropriate agencies and experts from outside the public service.

One of Information Canada's more important jobs would be to contribute to standards of performance in government information work as a whole. Another would be the distribution of an entirely new range of public information. Still another would be an effort to improve the public's access to information about federal programmes, and to create a free but co-ordinated flow of information between Ottawa and the rest of the country. This process would involve not only the two official languages but, in some cases, other languages as well. The prime function of Information Canada would be the bringing of the people's direct and informed participation in federal affairs. It would emphasize relevant research, develop feed-back on federal information from the regions of the country. Its concerns would therefore involve not only the distribution of information but also the government's ability to keep abreast of changing social circumstances and the changing needs of the people. Information Canada would bring together many information activities — such as those involving culture, economics, science and technology — that are now either fragmented, duplicated in various corners of the public service, or are simply not undertaken at all. Moreover, it would create a number of internal units to achieve its objectives. Its main operation would therefore reflect both alignment and an extension of government information services.

Information Canada should operate within the framework of an existing ministry. The Department of the

Secretary of State might be appropriate since it already has cultural responsibilities. The Department of Supply and Services, which has central service functions, is another possibility. And Treasury Board's involvement in finances and interdepartmental co-ordination makes it yet another. Whatever the ministry, however, it is essential that it recognize the character and importance of information and that, within it, Information Canada have a certain degree of administrative self-containment. The head of Information Canada should have ready access to his Minister, and report to him directly.

The new agency would be located in the national capital region. It would be under the direction of a public servant at no lower a level than that of a Deputy Minister or Senior Assistant Deputy Minister. There are several reasons why the head of Information Canada must function at the most senior levels of the public service. For one thing, his rôle as a co-ordinator on information activities would be not only important but also extremely sensitive. For another, he would be reporting directly to a Cabinet Minister. Part of his administrative job would be to bring together talented, competent, and already well-paid information personnel from inside and outside the public service. Indeed, he would be the head of an agency that might incorporate such senior staff as that of the former Queen's Printer and the head of the Exhibition Commission. And finally, throughout our investigations, we were aware of an urgent need to upgrade the importance of the information service officers and their work. The status and the qualifications of the head of Information Canada should reflect this urgency from the start.

The head of Information Canada would carry out his responsibilities with the help of assistants, and the functional directors of the main administrative, technical and programme sections of the agency. In building Information Canada, he should make a conscious and continuing effort to guarantee the balanced participation of both official languages. His other responsibilities would include advising his Minister on aspects of information programmes and policies, administering specific policies, co-ordinating programmes and services, and preparing plans to meet government information objectives.

The head of Information Canada would also be responsible for the production, the service facilities and the necessary liaison that might arise out of policies for information services outside Canada, but not for the policies themselves. (Policy direction in foreign matters,

would come from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, assisted by an advisory board and in consultation with other relevant departments in the government.) Information Canada would finance directly the production of material of common and interdepartmental interest for use in information abroad. At home it would also finance advisory services for departments, and the work that it undertakes on its own initiative. In other cases, departments and agencies would pay for the services that Information Canada provides them. To start, Information Canada would require a modest investment of new monies — how modest depends on how many regional offices the government decides to establish in the early stages, and how elaborate a central mechanism they want to set up. But these monies, looked at in terms of a five-year budget, might be recovered by the savings accomplished by a rationalization of existing services during that period.

The head of Information Canada would be required to prepare an annual report for tabling in the Commons and, in the normal course of events, the report would be sent to the appropriate Committee of Parliament. The Report would review the year's activities at Information Canada, and would include special reference to problems of public access to government information. One of Information Canada's responsibilities would be to act as a public advocate in matters of information, to help protect and make practical the right of public access to timely government information. Similar functions of public advocacy exist in some areas of government activity but, so far, not in the field of information. This reticence is not reflected in some other western democracies; in France, for instance, an "auditeur" was recently appointed a Minister. Information Canada would require adequate support staff for this purpose.

Generally, as we see Information Canada, its other activities would involve advising, providing service, co-ordinating, reviewing, and initiating certain programmes of its own. It would advise departments and agencies of government, including those with central control functions, on organization, personnel and programmes that concern information. It would offer such services as regional offices and technical production. It would co-ordinate on those occasions that the government chose to designate it as a "lead agency" for major information programmes. Information Canada would then have a mandate to co-ordinate the efforts of other departments and agencies in devising a coherent and effective programme. In such cases, it might do the production work itself, or supervise

it. Information Canada would *review* selected information programmes of departments and agencies and report their value to Treasury Board. It would regularly review the language, design and style of some of the government's information production, and it would conduct or sponsor research into the usefulness of various communication projects, and into the information that special publications require.

Information Canada, within established policy directives, would also *initiate* information programmes that have never existed because no government has ever required any department to take a government-wide view of information. These could include programmes of general documentation, exhibits and advertising. Or a government were to approve a corporate identity programme, for example, or design systems for information in all media, Information Canada would introduce them.

A final point. We're describing Information Canada as a fairly elaborate and tight structure. It is worth remembering, however, that without the right people no administrative structure ever works very well; and this may be particularly true of organizations that depend for their success on their getting along with other organizations. The quality of Information Canada's work will depend on the quality, the calibre and the rank of the men and women who work for it.

The Shape of Information Canada

Without prejudging the exact organization of Information Canada, or the order of its "phasing in", or precise financing, the Task Force suggests that its main functional units might be as follows:

a. Total Communications Unit.

The chief responsibility of this inter-disciplinary group would be the refinement of information concepts and techniques in order to assist departments and the central agencies in their programmes of reviewing and financing information activity. It would offer an advisory service to all federal departments and agencies to help them improve the quality of their own information efforts. It would also produce, on request, special information programmes that require concepts of total communication.

The Total Communications Unit would conduct research into aspects of the communications process — including ways to involve various publics in the decision-making of government, the effective use of language and me-

nethods of evaluating information programmes. It work in close collaboration with research agencies inside and outside government.

would carry out its planning and co-ordination with al awareness of the information needs of audiences e scientific, social, economic and cultural omies of Canada. The Total Communications Unit also be active in a continuing consideration of the nation requirements of the regions of Canada, and ul undertake projects involving publics that past nformation information efforts have not reached. It l plan and contribute to the implementation of nation programmes, and this work would have partic- mportance in cases that involved more than one tment or high government priority.

other area of responsibility for the Total Commu- ons Unit would be Government Advertising. Advert- recommendations would be made by an independent tising board but the board would be assisted by the and the purpose of the whole arrangement would be ure quality and efficiency, merit and fairness. The would consist of representatives of major advert- advertising experts who are free of conflict of st; and representatives from the media. It would ate the capacities of various advertising agencies to bs for the department and in consultation with the tments concerned, recommend agencies for specific

The Total Communications Unit would also concern with the government's use of design in the media. ul assist in the development of a general policy to porate design systems for federal information in all, and it would establish guidelines for both federal epartmental identification programmes. The Total uncommunications staff assigned to problems of design l work with the help of the departments and agencies outside experts. At times, the unit would also work ose co-operation with other units inside Information da, particularly those for publishing and for audio- and exhibit production.

ially, through consultation with the Public Service nission and Treasury Board, the Total Communicati- Unit would aid in the training and development of nation officers throughout the government.

"Public Advocate" function.

function would be carried out under defined policy lines to study complaints that concern government

information and to help citizens get answers. To do this, Information Canada would rely partly on such resources as the regional offices and referral centre. There are several reasons why the Task Force believes Information Canada should assume such a responsibility. It found, for instance, that areas of the public service are slow to answer letters from the public, and sometimes, quick to deny access to public information. The right of the citizen to information and the obligation of the Government to provide it may be firmly proclaimed but, in the end, information policy is difficult to legislate. There is a real need for an official and practical recognition of the need to assist citizens, and the administration, in the application of the right of access to government information.

c. Referral Centre.

The Referral Centre would consist of an indexing unit, to store reference material commonly requested by the public; an enquiries service to deal with telephone en- quiries; and a mail unit that would either direct enquiries to the proper sources of information or reply directly. The Referral Centre would also study and advise govern- ment on the most efficient ways – including the future use of computers – to deal with the growing volume of individuals' requests for government information.

d. Regional Offices.

The government badly needs a field staff to strengthen and co-ordinate the flow of information between the regions of Canada and the National Capital. The system might begin with a minimum of five Information Canada offices in the main regions of the country. Each office would be under the direction of a full-time information director. He would have access to the technical resources and expertise of Information Canada. He would work to ensure interdepartmental liaison in an effort to achieve co-ordination and a united presentation in regional information programmes. The regional offices would also handle local enquiries.

The director of each regional office should be appointed at an administrative level that is sufficient to give him the authority to deal effectively with provincial representa- tives and local organizations on all matters that concern information.

The effectiveness of the regional offices would depend, to a large degree, on the co-operation they establish with other government agencies, private organizations and the public. The regional information director would, for ex-

ample, make a point of supporting the information services of the various departments in his region. He would offer them both expertise and supplementary information resources.

He would also be a channel between the provincial and federal governments on general questions of information. The regional office, in its relations with provincial organizations, would be primarily concerned with programmes that are the result of federal-provincial co-operation and cost-sharing. In cases where the federal contribution is significant, regional offices might assist in developing information programmes that reflect the joint nature of the projects.

The regional offices, while helping people to get information, would inevitably develop a knowledge of the problems of various publics. This knowledge, along with social surveys and information from other sources, would assist the government to estimate the value of its programmes.

A unit at Information Canada's headquarters would support the work of the regional offices. The general task of the central unit would be to establish a coherent and responsive federal presence on the local scene. Through the regional offices, it would make information available on larger complexes of federal services, programmes and policies than the functional departments can currently provide on their own. Moreover, it would offer a general assessment of the effectiveness of government information programmes at the local level, and thereby supplement departmental channels of feedback. The central unit of the regional system would also maintain liaison with federal departments and agencies that, due to the nature and location of their facilities, could assist in the spreading of government information.

e. Audio-visual and Exhibits.

We propose that the government transfer either all or part of the Canadian Government Photo Centre and Canadian Government Exhibition Commission to Information Canada. This would permit the integration of experts who are already involved in design and production with the supporting skills of total communications.

An audio-visual unit would enable the administration, for the first time, to make full and effective use of radio, television and film to explain its programmes and policies. In cases where the information objective transcended departmental interests, the unit would undertake projects of its own. To the greatest extent practical, the unit would

employ staff and facilities that are already part of public service. It would offer expertise to other government information staff in such fields as radio, television (including closed-circuit and VTR) and, through National Film Board in some cases, in low-cost film immediate use, slides and projection systems. The unit might also prepare special material for public servants to increase their awareness of information problems and policies.

f. Documentation Canada.

The major responsibility of Documentation Canada would be to publish and distribute – on behalf of the government and its departments and agencies, and on its own initiative – material in areas of common interest that have been defined by the government. It would also assist the departments and agencies in their publications.

We propose that Documentation Canada incorporate the existing general publishing and distribution section and the sales facilities now within the Department of Supply and Services. This would integrate a highly important activity with more general objectives and resources. It could be done without weakening departmental responsibility in the field of publishing perhaps, in a way that would increase the participation in government publishing of private printing companies.

As one of its more important responsibilities, Documentation Canada would undertake the production of the *Canada Yearbook*, and publications of national interest that are not available from private publishers. It would also explore the possibility of producing or having produced by a wire service analytical press digests on Canadian affairs. These might be produced on request on a daily basis, and would be available to federal departments, agencies and individuals. Based on developments, views and reports within Canada and abroad, press digests might be issued chronologically and by subject.

g. Information Abroad.

This unit would have resources to assist departments and agencies in their information work outside Canada. Its purpose would be to adapt the work of Documentation Canada, and mobilize other technical resources and export services of the government, to increase the effectiveness of Canadian information abroad. It would co-operate with agencies and organizations that already carry international responsibilities in information.

There is a fairly intimate relationship between information activities abroad and the general policies of external affairs, and therefore the work of this branch of Information Canada would require a particularly close association with the work of the Department of External Affairs, strengthened by the appointment there of an Assistant Under-Secretary for Public Affairs.

We also suggest the establishment of a board to help improve Canada's programmes of information abroad. It would consist of senior government officials, and representatives of private industry and organizations that have an interest in the quality of Canada's image abroad. The board would advise the Secretary of State for External Affairs, on the basis of programme reviews, on information policies abroad and their implementation.

Special Information Services.

This branch would offer a number of special services – designed to achieve a rapid and economical flow of information – for all the departments and agencies of the Government. It would operate a wire service to permit the transmittal of information in well-defined categories, including press releases and other information that has priority and urgency. (For this purpose it should receive advance notification of announcements and, where possible, advance texts from departments and agencies. This is as essential for overseas information as it is internally.) The wire service should be made available to users on request. Special Information Services would compile mailing lists to include publics or special groups that two or more federal organizations are interested in reaching. It would rationalize departmental clipping services to achieve new economies and new efficiency. In studying ways to organize a clipping service, it may be necessary to rely on both public and private resources. Finally, Special Information Services might develop concordances and references for use by federal departments, for general research purposes. These could include, for example, a central record of government press releases.

Administration.

Information Canada's administrative service would be responsible for general administration, including such tasks as tendering and contracting. The structure we have outlined above is complex and reasonably difficult to achieve. But simple proposals can solve complex problems, and the need of the Canadian people for government information may be one

of the more complex social problems of our time. The construction and the vigorous operation of Information Canada will require talent and ingenuity and, if we may use so dated a word, dedication. Still, the history of the country indicates that, in past crises, Canadians have not been noticeably short of such qualities. Therefore, in addition to the eight recommendations outlined previously in this chapter, we recommend that:

9.

A central resource and services organization, to be known as Information Canada, be established in an existing Ministry. This organization would facilitate and co-ordinate the technical and operational aspects of information activities in Canada and abroad; and would be responsible for certain activities that are currently not being carried out, or are receiving inadequate attention within departments. Through its personnel and production, Information Canada should ensure that the two official languages are used as equal instruments of creativity and communication.

10.

Information Canada be assigned the function of public advocate in matters of access to federal information and timeliness of replies to citizen's queries and be provided with adequate staff to fulfil this function.

11.

A personnel division within Information Canada be given the main responsibility for providing advice and assistance to the Public Service Commission and the Treasury Board to ensure the formation of a career service which would encourage the upgrading and mobility of Public Affairs personnel, help develop their professional ability, and achieve a better linguistic competence within the information function.

12.

Offices of Information Canada be set up in stages in each of the main regions to strengthen, facilitate and co-ordinate the exchange of public information on federal programmes between the regions and Ottawa.

13.

An independent board be established consisting of leading advertisers, representatives of the media and other advertising professionals free from any conflict of interest who should, with the assistance of Information Canada, review government needs and the capacity of advertising agencies and recommend to departments and agencies, on the basis of merit, the agency or agencies capable of undertaking particular advertising assignments.

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14.

Canada's information programmes abroad be developed by the interested departments in harmony with the policies administered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs with the advice of a board drawing its membership from the public and private sectors; and that appropriate programmes be serviced by a division of Information Canada.

15.

The head of Information Canada enjoy the status and authority of a Deputy Minister or a senior Assistant Deputy Minister. His Minister, in principle, should be excluded from serving as chairman of the Cabinet Committee charged with Information Policy.

16.

If the government agrees to these recommendations, it establish priorities and "phasing in" procedures, and draw upon present expertise within government to determine the precise financing, personnel arrangements and structures for Information Canada; and that, during these considerations, the government take into account such recent reports as the one prepared for The Science Council of Canada: *Scientific and Technical Information in Canada*.

17.

Any legislative implications of these, and other proposals contained in this report, receive early attention from the government's law officers *

The chief general argument of the Task Force is that, although total mutual deafness has not yet afflicted the Canadian Government and the Canadian people, the government information services have been allowed to become so archaic in their methods, disjointed in their operations, and fruitless in their pursuits that their efforts have amounted to a kind of forfeiture. The Canadian Government has forfeited something to innumerable movements, and private interests, and revolutionary stirrings, and what it has forfeited is a piece of its right and its chance to have effective conversation with the people of the country.

It should be possible – in a country that's perhaps as famous for its ingenuity in the science and theory of communications as it is for its hockey players – for the government to grab hold of the new technology and use

it in the national interest. It should be possible to take new technology of communications, and a fresh re-examination for the function of government information, and relate them to what is best in our parliamentary system. It should be possible to use information in a programme which will bring an unprecedented degree of public participation in the affairs of the Canadian State. The Government's information services are the obvious place to begin such a programme.

* All of the recommendations of Volumes I and II may be found in the annex which follows.

ecommend that:

The right of Canadians to full, free and timely information and obligation of the State to provide information about its programmes and policies be publicly declared and as the foundation for the development of new government policies in field. This right and obligation might be comprehended within a new constitution in the context of freedom of expression.

A committee of Ministers be charged with the task of developing effective information policies and facilitating a coherent and economical approach by the Executive to the federal information function.

The government move in due course the subject of information policy to a Committee of Parliament, in addition, would receive for review the tabled annual report of Information Canada.

To reinforce the advantages which a national system can provide all sections of the community, federal-provincial consultations be undertaken with a view to setting up permanent mechanisms to improve communications between levels of government in the field of information to facilitate the transfer of governmental information from and to the various regions; to co-operate in the appropriate way to ease the public's access to all government information; to make better use abroad of all available information resources.

Steps be taken to reach substantial sections of the Canadian public that are present outside the mainstream of the government information flow. That these include inviting the co-operation of provincial and municipal governments, state agencies and voluntary organizations in the establishment and financing of more Citizens Advisory Bureaux and neighbourhood councils which would be administered by non-governmental agencies.

In seeking ways to realize greater participation and understanding of the democracy and of government, some systematic and co-ordinated attention be

given to communications research and particularly to the establishment of a social survey unit (in association with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics) which would provide government, Parliament and the general public with a better appreciation than is now available to them of the needs of sections of the population and of the affects on Canadians of existing federal legislation and regulations.

7. Departments and agencies develop and implement information policies consistent with departmental and agency objectives, and with the information policies of the Federal Government to reflect the enhanced rôle of the information function and information officers and strengthen their relations with the media and with particular publics nationally and regionally; and that departments and agencies be encouraged to increase the creative use of the two official languages.

8. A Council of Directors of Public Affairs (formerly Information) Divisions, from departments and agencies, serviced by Information Canada, be set up to permit a better understanding of government policies affecting all or a particular group of them, to pool knowledge on current information plans thus developing a broader view of the context in which they operate.

9. A central resource and services organization, to be known as Information Canada, be established in an existing Ministry. This organization would facilitate and co-ordinate the technical and operational aspects of information activities in Canada and abroad; and would be responsible for certain activities that are currently not being carried out, or are receiving inadequate attention within departments. Through its personnel and production, Information Canada should ensure that the two official languages are used as equal instruments of creativity and communication.

10. Information Canada be assigned the function of public advocate in matters of access to federal information and timeliness of replies to citizen's queries and

be provided with adequate staff to fulfil this function.

11. A personnel division within Information Canada be given the main responsibility for providing advice and assistance to the Public Service Commission and the Treasury Board to ensure the formation of a career service which would encourage the up-grading and mobility of public affairs personnel, help develop their professional ability, and achieve a better linguistic competence within the information function.

12. Offices of Information Canada be set up in stages in each of the main regions to strengthen, facilitate and co-ordinate the exchange of public information on federal programmes between the regions and Ottawa.

13. An independent board be established consisting of leading advertisers, representatives of the media and other advertising professionals free from any conflict of interest who should, with the assistance of Information Canada, review government needs and the capacity of advertising agencies and recommend to departments and agencies, on the basis of merit, the agency or agencies capable of undertaking particular advertising assignments.

14. Canada's information programmes abroad be developed by the interested departments in harmony with the policies administered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs with the advice of a board drawing its membership from the public and private sectors; and that appropriate programmes be serviced by a division of Information Canada.

15. The head of Information Canada enjoy the status and authority of a Deputy Minister or a senior Assistant Deputy Minister. His Minister, in principle, should be excluded from serving as chairman of the Cabinet Committee charged with Information Policy.

16. If the government agrees to these recommendations, it establish priorities and "phasing in" procedures, and draw upon present expertise within government to determine the precise financing, personnel arrangements and structures

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for Information Canada; and that, during these considerations, the government take into account such recent reports as the one prepared for The Science Council of Canada: *Scientific and Technical Information in Canada*.

17. Any legislative implications of these, and other proposals contained in this Report, receive early attention from the government's law officers.

the following is the Table of Contents for Volume II and all the recommendations which arise from the research and analyses in that Volume. Papers I to V, VI and VII, and Papers VIII and XI contain summary conclusions.

The Evolution of Concepts and Methods of Information

The Theory of the Rôle of Information in Participatory Democracy

The Right of Access and Government Information Systems

International Public Opinion Survey

Leaders' Survey

Strategic Gatekeepers Federal News

recommend that:

The government give greater recognition to the function and requirements of Ottawa Press Gallery, in particular, by facilitating access to official information, by improving existing channels of communication between the Public Service and the Gallery and by making more background information available in the two official languages.

The government should also give greater recognition to its responsibility to ensure that official information reaches sections of the Canadian public.

Studies on The Historical Development of Federal Information Services

Finances; Structures; Personnel

Finances

To measure the effectiveness of government information services in relation to costs, and to provide a consistent basis for determining potential changes in expenditures, we recommend that:

1. The appropriate authorities define information services for accounting purposes and that all departments and agencies use the same definitions to identify information expenditures.
2. All information expenditures of departments and agencies be recorded in sufficient detail and in a consistent manner that readily permits comparisons.
3. Any expansion of information programmes be justified in accordance with policies to be established by the government. All information programmes and activities lacking an accepted high priority in relation to government policies be dropped or drastically curtailed.

Structures of Departmental and Agency Information Services

We recommend that:

1. Departments and agencies develop information policies consistent with their objectives and with the information policies of the Federal Government.
2. Information policies recognize the responsibility of the department's information services for the content of its information production, for advising the Minister and Deputy Minister on policy and content, on methods of identifying the department's particular audience, and for long-term planning.
3. The Director of Information act as a senior policy adviser responsible to his Deputy Minister, and be a member of the departmental or agency Management Committee, with easy access to the Minister and Deputy Minister.
4. Information Divisions be renamed Public Affairs Divisions and Information

Service Officers become Public Affairs Officers to emphasize their responsibility to the public, as well as to the government.

5. The budgets of Information Divisions be reviewed to ensure that tasks not be duplicated in areas such as research, technical facilities, and regional representation, which could be conducted more effectively and economically by a co-ordinating service.

6. Departmental and agency Information Divisions be responsible for information budgets.

7. Information Directors together with relevant central agencies, review departmental personnel, structures, and management practices to ensure productive and efficient use of information staff and resources.

Personnel

We recommend that the government:

1. Create a career service for Information Services Officers to be called the Canadian Public Affairs Service of which the officer members would be recruited, trained, and thereafter assigned and transferred by the Public Service Commission, in consultation with the departments and agencies. For these purposes, the Public Service Commission should be enlarged and strengthened.
2. Ensure that the staff of the Treasury Board is adequate to carry out its responsibilities for the proper functioning of this new career service.
3. Require the Commission and the Board to work closely with and be advised by Information Canada.
4. Establish a Personnel Division within Information Canada to counsel the Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission on recruiting, classification, and performance standards; the Personnel Division would also make recommendations on general and specialized training, on career planning and development and on methods of improving the linguistic balance required by the service.
5. Ensure that present training pro-

grammes for information officers be made more comprehensive, and be improved in quality, so that the present obsolete classification levels are upgraded, to provide access for information officers to senior executive levels, and to make feasible their mobility through successive departments and agencies.

6. A Council of Directors of Public Affairs (formerly Information) Divisions, from departments and agencies, serviced by Information Canada, be set up to permit a better understanding of government policies affecting all or a particular group of them, to pool knowledge on current information plans thus developing a broader view of the context in which they operate.

IX Specialized Information Activities

We recommend that:

Media Relations

1. The media relations function in the Federal Government be more clearly identified and strengthened; and that its scope be extended nationally and regionally to encompass relations with appropriate media, organizations and associations in Canada.
2. The classification and status of media relations officers be revised in accordance with these increased responsibilities.
3. The media relations function be carried out by, or under the immediate supervision of, departmental information directors; or where, as in foreign affairs, a separate press office appears to be warranted, in close consultation with the respective heads.
4. The officer principally responsible for media relations be fully informed at the earliest opportunity of departmental policies and programmes; have direct access in the performance of his duties to all departmental levels including his Minister; and be relieved of administrative or other duties incompatible with his main responsibilities.
5. Steps be taken to improve procedures for the timely preparation and approval of news releases and background material and that media relations officers be closely associated with this production.
6. Media relations officers maintain close liaison with regional departmental representatives, and with federal regional offices, either directly or through Information Canada.

Audio-visual

1. An audio-visual unit utilizing existing personnel and facilities to the extent possible and having expertise in such fields as radio, television (including closed circuit and VTR), low-cost films for immediate use, slides and various

projection systems, be set up within Information Canada to advise government departments and agencies on policy and to conduct approved operations within limited scope in this field. In this connection, an examination should be made of the audio-visual capacity of the Department of Agriculture to determine the extent to which its personnel and facilities might be transferred to Information Canada for use by other departments.

2. In developing such a unit, the government make efforts to differentiate clearly between the unit's informational functions and the statutory obligations of the National Film Board.

3. This unit have sufficient financial resources to assure an enlarged and coordinated operational output within Information Canada; and guidelines developed concerning the relationship of this unit with departments, their personnel and private industry.

4. The application of current techniques assure the full use of media by administration to explain policies and programmes, including those on information, to all public servants.

5. The government consider recommending that Parliament study the possibility of making these facilities available to the Speaker of the House and use by Members of Parliament who wish to reach special publics and regions.

Still Photography

1. Information Canada assume management of the Canadian Government Photo Centre and utilize existing government personnel and equipment in the information field to ensure standards are met; provide a photo-story service to advise departments and agencies of their requirements either directly or through the private sector.

Exhibits and Displays

1. The Canadian Government Exhibitions Commission continue to provide necessary expertise for the conception, design and production of Federal

ent exhibits and displays in Canada abroad.

The Commission be transferred to Information Canada, and a decision be made as to whether appropriate technical components should remain within the Department of Public Works.

Funds be provided Information Canada to undertake a programme of general interest exhibits.

Federal departments and agencies may be allotted funds for their exhibits, and either use the services of the Commission or secure through the Commission the assistance of private firms.

In situations where the joint interests of the Federal and provincial governments are involved, where provincial components might, by agreement, fully be included in federal displays, where there is more than one pavilion in Canada, then closer co-ordination of the responsible federal and provincial authorities be employed.

gn

The government establish a general policy on design, incorporating systems for federal information and guidelines both federal and departmental identification programmes.

The policy and guidelines be developed, and their implementation and review ensured, by a central design group in Information Canada working with departments, agencies and outside experts, with a view to attaining the highest quality at the least possible cost.

Parliamentary Returns

In keeping with the principles of participation and freedom of access to information, the government provide informative replies to questions put in Parliament than has been the tradition.

To facilitate the preparation of such replies, senior parliamentary returns officers operate under appropriate governmental guidelines and preferably be

part of departmental information divisions, or be required to maintain the closest possible liaison with them.

Referral Centre

1. To improve access to governmental information in Ottawa and the regions, a referral centre be set up within Information Canada with a responsibility for compiling and making available sources of information, for replying to general enquiries, and for applying the latest technology to deal with this problem.

Mailing Lists

1. Departments and agencies develop and maintain mailing lists based on a definition and knowledge of their publics, and be responsible for keeping these lists up-to-date.
2. A Mailing Unit within Information Canada and in co-operation with the departments and agencies and the media research section be responsible for maintaining and monitoring a central system for mailing lists and for compiling and making available lists of common interest.
3. The Unit be responsible, in particular, for establishing mailing lists for reports of royal commissions, task forces and special study groups in consultation with these groups, and taking into account existing statutory requirements.
4. The Unit be responsible for central mailing of news releases and, on request, of other informational material.

Press Clippings

1. The existing Central Clipping Service in the Privy Council Office might be transferred to a central clipping unit within Information Canada and appropriately extended to serve the needs of the Privy Council Office, and of departments and special groups which do not have such facilities.
2. Information Canada should undertake a study to rationalize the press

clipping function, including the utilization of private companies and the reference facilities of the National Library.

Press Digests

1. A daily, analytical press digest on significant developments and views within and outside Canada (when they involve this country) be produced for officials and, on request, for other interested persons and organizations.
2. To insure full and timely national coverage, daily digests be prepared, if possible by Canadian Press, but should this prove impossible other means should be explored.
3. Press digests be progressively broadened to include contributions from other media.
4. Specialized chronological digests produced centrally or by individual departments be made available on subscription.

Personnel Relations

1. The government recognize public servants as a public of special concern and, as a matter of policy, improve its dialogue with them through a planned and consistent programme of government-employee communications.
2. Information services, in co-operation with personnel officers and management, initiate a two-way flow of information about personnel policies and also of the general programmes and goals of departments and the government.

x
The Big Four: Departments of Manpower and Immigration, Agriculture, the Queen's Printer and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics

Manpower and Immigration

We recommend that:

1. The Information Service be involved not only in the formulation of departmental policies concerned with immigration, but also with manpower.

2. The Information Service develop public affairs policies for consideration by departmental authorities consistent with policies referred to in (1) and in keeping with the government's overall information policy.

3. The Information Service, working in close consultation with programme officers, ensure that its specific programmes are designed to achieve the Department's public affairs policies referred to in (2); and ensure also that programmes reflect the needs of the various publics the Department is attempting to serve.

4. In promoting the use of services offered by Canada Manpower Centres, the Information Service make a special effort to inform hard-to-reach sectors of the public on the specific departmental programmes that could benefit them and, with the assistance of Information Canada, conduct additional experimental information programmes coupled with appropriate evaluation systems.

5. In keeping with the objectives of personnel policies outlined in Paper VIII, measures be introduced for staff development to improve planning, training, orientation and effectiveness.

6. The Information Service assume greater responsibility in keeping departmental staff abreast of public responses to its policies and activities, and aware of current developments in the Department.

7. The regional information function be strengthened, and channels of communication opened between the regional offices and headquarters. Programmes

relating to the particular needs of the various regions should be developed in close co-operation with Information Canada, particularly with the regional offices of Information Canada.

8. The Department ensure there is a better balance between the use of print and audio-visual techniques in order to communicate more effectively with their various publics.

9. The recommendations concerning design and departmental identification stipulated in Paper IX be applied to this Department.

10. Relevant information publications of the Department be distributed by the most effective methods including Post Office sub-stations, Unemployment Insurance Offices, and other available public and private outlets.

Agriculture

We recommend that:

1. The Information Division of the Department of Agriculture be directly involved in the review of that Department's policies.

2. The Information Division develop public affairs policies for consideration by departmental authorities consistent with policies referred to in (1) and in keeping with the government's overall information policy.

3. The Information Division ensure its specific programmes are designed to achieve the Department's public affairs policy, and be responsible for co-ordinating all the Department's public information programmes.

4. The Information Division – in defining its objectives and activities related to such areas as national agriculture policies, federal programmes and the transfer of regional information – take into account the need for improved co-ordinating procedures in federal and provincial information services.

5. The Information Division prepare a handbook of public information for all departmental staff and other government extension workers. The handbook should

set out the departmental information objectives and should be made available to interested provincial departments and the public.

6. Programmes and activities of the Information Division be constantly reviewed, and impartially evaluated, with the assistance of Information Canada, to ensure that they meet the objectives mentioned in (1), (2) and (3) and rationalize departmental staff establishments in terms of the services which may be made available in Information Canada.

7. In keeping with the objectives personnel policies outlined in Paper VIII, measures be introduced to improve staff development, including training and morale.

8. To improve the quality of its work the Information Division have access to specialists in economics, sociology and other fields of special knowledge.

9. The Information Division assume greater responsibility in keeping departmental staff abreast of public responses to its policies and activities, and aware of current developments in the Department.

10. The recommendations concerning design and departmental identification stipulated in Paper IX be applied in the Department.

11. To ensure the fullest and most economical use of the Department of Agriculture's photo and exhibits sources, a departmental policy in these fields be laid down in line with recommendations on these subjects in the previous paper.

12. The Department of Agriculture cease serving other departments in audio-visual and exhibits fields as soon as an alternative common facility becomes available to all departments.

The Queen's Printer

We recommend that:

1. The publishing functions presently vested in the Queen's Printer, including its sales promotion, distribution and

hasing divisions be incorporated as anch of Information Canada to be vvn as Documentation Canada. The director of Documentation Canbe given the necessary authority and reses to carry out his duties within framework of the policies defined by government.

The director, using the technical reses available in Information Canbe responsible for the drawing-up implementation of a general publishpolicy.

The director be kept informed of publications programmes of the us departments and agencies in r to advise them on their own publishing policy and where necessary, to re a wider distribution of those cations of general interest.

Documentation Canada be given the nsibility for publishing a number tisting works under his authority and publications of general interest.

The director be made responsible he bookstores of the Queen's Printer; concerned with enlarging the rôle of Queen's Printer with regard to nal information and, more particuly, with regard to the free distribu of certain publications of public est; and be granted the necessary s, including advertising, to attain objective.

In co-operation with the National arary, Documentation Canada establish ties with private bookstores and ic libraries in order to ensure a r distribution of books published for federal government. Agreements ld be concluded with a greater num of private bookstores so that they become the official repositories for rnment publications and be able to m the public regarding these publons.

In co-operation with the National arary, the branch prepare catalogues e works produced for the Federal ernment and draw up lists of publions intended for a specialized ic.

In order to correct the anomaly by

which the Queen's Printer is given no control over the quality of the language of the publication, the director be granted the right of inspection in this area both with regard to linguistic quality and the quality of the publication as an instrument of communication.

10. In co-operation with Canadian editors and booksellers, Documentation Canada study all possible ways of improving the distribution of Canadian publications abroad.

11. In the event that the Canadian Government Printing Bureau is unable to satisfy the needs of Information Canada, of departments or agencies, or is unable to do so within the required time, the director be given the authority to entrust the work of publishing and printing, through tender, to private firms.

12. The Canadian Government Printing Bureau, already integrated within the Department of Supply and Services, have no other responsibility than that of printing for the federal government documents which, for reasons of security, economy and efficiency, cannot be given to private firms (*Hansard*, *Canada Gazette*, *Statutes*, National Research Council, National Defence, etc.).

13. Documentation Canada be responsible for agreements with the appropriate international agencies and certain foreign countries in order to ensure, in the latter case, a better reciprocal distribution of publications.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics

The general information rôle of the DBS is so critical to the government and to important and various Canadian and foreign publics that we have determined to go beyond a narrow interpretation of our terms of reference in drawing up our recommendations on it. Because of the Bureau's special relevance to the Canadian information function, we recommend with respect to the Bureau itself that:

1. In the development of a governmen information policy, the DBS be

recognized as having a major and specialized information rôle to play in serv- ing government departments, agencies and various publics.

2. As a consequence, DBS be transferred from its present position within a Ministry which has its own special publics to one which would be more compatible with the Bureau's central service functions, and that its autonomy be preserved.

3. The recently introduced policy, which has made it possible for DBS to undertake projects for persons and organizations outside government on a fee-for-service basis, be confirmed and the resources for this purpose increased.

With respect to the Information Division of DBS we recommend that:

1. The Information Division develop public affairs policies for consideration by the Dominion Statistician and consistent with the overall information policies laid down by the government.

2. This policy reflect both DBS' major information function, and the need to give information a higher priority and status than it enjoys at present within the Bureau.

3. The Year Book Division continue to work in close co-operation with DBS but as a unit in Documentation Canada.

4. The DBS Catalogue be revised so that it can be used readily and easily by a larger number of Canadians. The possibility of its being issued annually should be examined.

5. Information programmes directly concerned with the output of specialized statistical divisions within the Bureau be expanded by the Information Division.

6. The Information Division endeavour to improve the public's understanding of the various services DBS offers and can perform on request.

7. Programmes and activities of the Information Division, and selected publications of the Bureau as a whole, be constantly reviewed and impartially evaluated with the assistance of Information Canada. Such reviews should include the information functions of the DBS regional offices.

8. The Information Division assume greater responsibility in keeping departmental staff abreast of public responses to its policies and activities and making them aware of current developments in the Department.

9. Personnel policies be reviewed in order to ensure better classification, recruitment and career development for the staff of the Information Division.

10. A more comprehensive multi-media approach be developed in the Information Division with the assistance and guidance of Information Canada.

XI
**Case Studies in the
Current Information Process**

XII
Canadian Information Abroad

We recommend that:

1. The Cabinet Committee charged with information policy meet, from time to time, to develop and facilitate a more coherent approach to governmental information policies and programmes abroad consistent with general objectives and priorities of Canadian foreign relations.

2. The authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs to fulfil his responsibilities for the projection of Canada abroad be reinforced by giving his Department the necessary resources.

3. Departments and agencies directly involved in information abroad retain responsibility for developing their respective policies and generally for implementing them and do so within the framework of the government's foreign and general information policies in order to avoid duplication.

4. In place of the Interdepartmental Committee on Information Abroad, the government set up a board on information policy abroad with necessary support staff and composed of deputy heads of departments, heads of government agencies and representatives of private organizations and associations directly interested in Canadian information abroad to advise the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

5. An Assistant Under Secretary for Public Affairs be appointed in the Department of External Affairs to be responsible for the Information, Cultural Affairs and Historical Divisions, and the press office of that Department. His responsibility should also include Information Canada centres abroad and liaison with appropriate departments and agencies.

6. Recommendations concerning the establishment of a career "Canadian Public Affairs Service" designed to achieve higher standards and mobility of personnel apply to full-time information personnel abroad and, where appropriate,

to foreign service personnel involved in information activities.

7. Information Canada be given sufficient resources to support Canada's information programmes abroad including the production of materials of common interest to all agencies concerned, research into the publics and the efficacies of Canadian information programmes abroad, and a liaison facility for visiting journalists programmes.

8. Information Canada centres be set up in foreign countries which have been given the highest information priority by the Government, and that all information personnel located in such places be regrouped under the authority of respective heads of mission; whether or not such centres exist, information activities of all departments in a foreign country be closely co-ordinated under the authority of the head of mission and be provided by the mission with common services conducive to improved efficiency.

9. Regional Information Canada centres be set up in stages to support the efforts of groups of missions selected on a high priority area basis; these centres make use of information specialists familiar with the region's interests and problems.

order to ensure that the Government of Canada develops a greater sensitivity to the information needs of the unreached we recommend that:

The government give more systematic and co-ordinated attention to the problems of communicating with those individuals and groups of citizens currently outside of, or unaffected by, the mainstream of Federal Government information and recognize that their information requirements must be given a priority.

More attention be given to research advanced techniques in the field of communication and that, in the light of the experimental nature of some of the research and programmes, adequate evaluation systems be introduced.

Experimental series such as The National Film Board's Challenge for Change and *Société nouvelle* be continued and be subject to the evaluation techniques mentioned above.

Steps be taken to ensure that Canadian citizens and newly arrived immigrants who have an insufficient understanding of either of the two official languages receive adequate Federal Government information of special interest to them in their own language either directly from the responsible agencies or directly through the most appropriate media.

Following consultations with provincial governments, citizens advisory bureaux be reinforced and/or established where necessary and be financed by the Federal Government in association with provincial and municipal governments and with national and international foundations and voluntary organizations. Further study be given to the possibility of assisting the establishment of neighbourhood councils to serve as units of the advisory bureaux. These bureaux and councils be administered by non-governmental organizations.

The Official Languages and Information

We recommend that:

1. A policy on languages in the field of information be clearly established by the government so that the requirements of communication with the general public and within information services may be met.
2. The Public Service Commission require that prospective information officers have a sufficient knowledge of both official languages, or the willingness and the ability to learn a language rapidly and a demonstrated ability to express themselves correctly in at least one of the languages; that it lay down precise standards of language proficiency; that it establish an objective test to ascertain the actual linguistic abilities of candidates; and finally, that there be at least one fully bilingual person on every selection board.
3. Information officers be given top priority for admission to language courses (bilingualism is a necessary qualification particularly for those officers responsible for media relations), and that courses be given to them in both official languages on social communication techniques and on the rôle of official information.
4. A sustained effort be made in all the information services to permit French-speaking officers to participate in the formulation and execution of information policies at the appropriate levels and, in particular, that more texts be conceived and prepared in French; that, as a result, there be more French-speaking information officers employed in the national capital and elsewhere as required, and that editing and production centres be established in a French-speaking milieu.
5. Information Canada be responsible, in consultation with the departments concerned, for determining priorities for the translation of texts, and that it establish close liaison with the Translation Bureau and the information services of departments and agencies in order to improve the quality of translations and to eliminate delays in making the English and French versions of the same publication available; for this purpose, the Translation Bureau should have an adequate staff and set up a training programme enabling translators to take language courses in a French-speaking environment.
6. All publications of a particular department in English and in French come under two chief editors who will assume responsibility in the respective languages for content, style and presentation, and that such editors constitute an advisory editorial committee for each language drawing on the expertise available in the Translation Bureau and Information Canada.
7. These advisory committees make regular comparative studies of publications of the different departments as well as official publications of foreign countries, and that for works destined for wide distribution in Canada or abroad, the editing of the complete text be entrusted to a centre responsible to Information Canada.

xv
The Arts - And the Crowd

We recommend that:

1. The Government of Canada formulate a clear policy concerning cultural information within the framework of its general information policy.
2. Cultural information policy recognize: *a*) the seriousness of the present problem in the field of cultural information due to the lack of development over the past 20 years of proper co-ordinating and integrating machinery by federal departments and agencies; *b*) the need to rectify this matter as quickly and efficiently as possible in co-operation with other governments and with the private sector.
3. The Department of the Secretary of State co-ordinate the cultural information produced by the agencies which report to or through the Minister and facilitate the development of closer liaison in this field with the Department of External Affairs.
4. A section in Documentation Canada be established to provide technical and professional advice and assistance to the Department of the Secretary of State in its information rôle and to other departments and agencies which have a secondary cultural information function.
5. This unit, with the co-operation of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the Secretary of State, develop continuing machinery for the systematic collection, storing, retrieving and distributing of basic data concerned with cultural matters.
6. A study be undertaken to report on the most efficient ways of applying current and future technology to collecting and storing, retrieving and distributing certain types of cultural information.

xvi
Advertising

We recommend that:

1. The government develop advertising policies and systems (consistent with the overall principles of its information policy and as an integral part of its information programmes) to ensure quality and efficiency, merit and fairness.
2. An independent board be established consisting of leading advertisers, representatives of the media and other advertising professionals free from any conflict of interest who should review government needs and the capacity of advertising agencies and recommend to departments and agencies, on the basis of merit, the agency or agencies capable of undertaking their particular government advertising assignment.
3. A unit in the total communications branch of Information Canada should assist the board by employing media and audience research, pre- and post-testing methods, etc., to assess government advertising requirements and in terms of these requirements use review procedures to advise on the capacity of advertising agencies.
4. The advertising group in the Department of Supply and Services should be incorporated into the total communications branch of Information Canada and be strengthened in order to produce improved expenditure statistics and to obtain the lowest rates for government advertising from all media.
5. Departments and agencies that already grant substantial advertising assignments should have advertising experts to help them formulate their requirements.
6. Treasury Board should, with the advice of Information Canada, scrutinize proposed budgets for advertising expenditures.

xvii Part I
Regional Information

We recommend that:

1. The development by the government, with the assistance of Information Canada, of a general regional information policy designed to meet the requirements of the various regions, to keep the Federal Government better informed of such needs at the information level and to make all Canadians generally better aware of the rôle and activities of the Federal Government.
2. Information Canada be entrusted with the general responsibility for distributing and co-ordinating federal information on a regional basis.
3. The setting up, in stages, of at least five regional information offices responsible to this central organization, which would have a director, staff and the required financial means.
4. Departments and agencies retain responsibility for their own particular regional information and for the appointment of their own regional information officer; the director of the regional office will be responsible for the co-ordination in the area of information of these officers and of the heads of the represented federal agencies.
5. An official telex information service designed to feed information into regional offices and possibly, on request, to other public or private organizations be set up.

**Part II
Federal-provincial Information Relations**

reinforce the advantages which a federal system can provide all sections of the community we recommend that:

Federal-provincial consultations be undertaken to set up permanent mechanisms to improve communications between levels of government in the field of information; to facilitate the transfer of governmental information from and to the various regions; to co-operate in the most appropriate way, in easing the public's access to all government information; and to make better use abroad of available information resources. Federal machinery to keep Canadians informed on federal-provincial relations and activities be reinforced on national and regional levels and greater attention be given to identifying popular participation.

**xviii
Social Surveys
and Communications Research**

We recommend that:

1. A social survey unit be established in association with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics but not as part of the Bureau and that this unit be situated within the Ministry to which DBS will report.
2. The value of research into all aspects of the communication process be officially recognized by government and that experts in this field be given a significant rôle to play in servicing a total communications unit in Information Canada.
3. In establishing such new research units the government should be conscious of the value to be gained by ensuring a sound balance and liaison between the public and private sectors.

**xix
Information
Technology**

We recommend that:

1. A major examination be undertaken using the best consultants available in the public and private sectors to report on the most efficient and effective measures of employing the rapidly changing electronic technology in all fields of information; on priorities to be established for its co-ordinated application over the next five, ten and 15 years; on its projected costs and benefits.
2. In the interim a small unit within Information Canada be established to advise the government on present and future uses of advanced technology in the field of information and to provide similar advice on request to departments and agencies.

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